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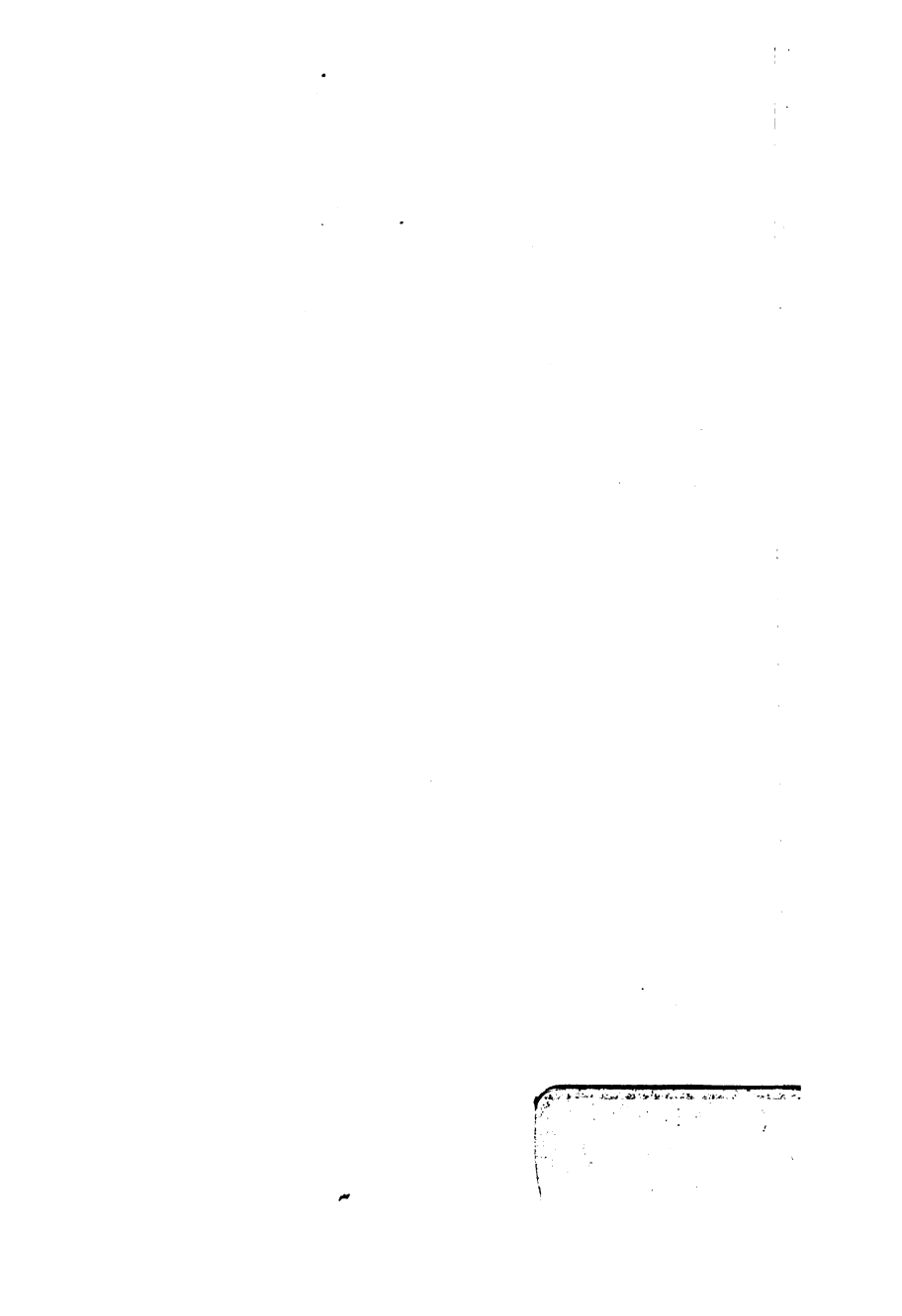
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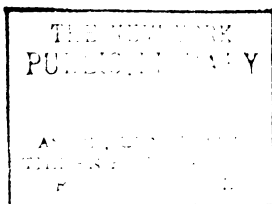
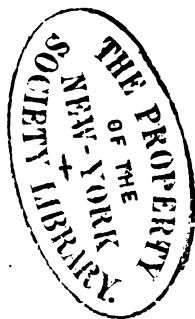


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THE TIGER PRINCE



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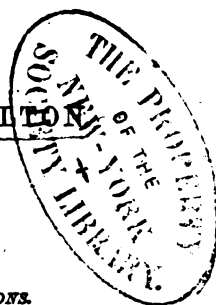
THE TIGER PRINCE;

OR, ADVENTURES IN

THE WILDS OF ABYSSINIA.

BY

WILLIAM DALTON



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

C. L. C.

BOSTON:
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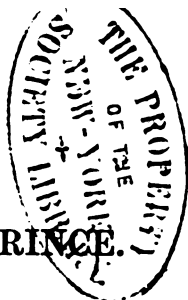
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THE TIGER PRINCE.

CHAPTER I.

MY REMAINS.

I OPENED my eyes, but could see nought: all was dark. "Where am I?" I murmured. To assist my memory, I lifted my hand to my forehead; but it was weak, almost powerless, and fell upon the pillow. Had I, I thought, fallen asleep to awaken in chaos? What terrible accident had happened to deprive me of my senses? *What? Ah, that I could not divine!* Still, the sense of hearing was keen enough: by the breathing I knew that a human being was near. The sound lent me courage, strength.

"Where, oh! where am I?"

"Hurrah, hurrah! he *wont* lose the number of his mess *this* time! He *wont* die! He's come back again from the long sleep the doctor sent him into to give him pace and quiet! But, hush, hush! Master Ned, dear! it's the Doctor's own orders — the blessing of an ould soldier on the kind gentleman — that, as soon as you can speak, you are to hold your tongue and not say a word!"

"Peter, dear old Peter, is it you?" I replied, now aroused to full consciousness by the voice of a faithful servant. "Servant" have I said? — let me add, *friend!*

"Shure, then, it wouldn't be safe for anybody else to be here, *and you in this strait*, if I knew it! But hush! you

musn't speak, Master Ned. It's hard lines, sartainly, when you have only just found your tongue in a sensible humor again, after such a lot of gibberish it's been talking for the last fortnight; but it's *orders*, the Doctor's orders, Master Ned, and we musn't go agin 'em, you know;" and he placed his great brawny hand softly, lovingly, upon my mouth.

"Nay, Peter, but I must speak. *Where* am I? *What* has been the matter? Have I been ill?"

"Hist!" he replied; "if it'll comfort your honor, I'll talk to you as long as Mrs. Sches— what's-her-name did to the Sultan, when she spun those yarns called the 'Arabian Nights,' just to keep off the next morning till the day after, and so on, to prevent her amiable husband from taking the head off her shoulders; but then *you* must listen only; for the Doctor doesn't care for your ears, so long as you keep your tongue quiet."

"Where am I, Peter?" I repeated, impatiently.

"Well, then, Master Ned, dear, your honor's in a small room in the British Hotel at Grand Cairo; which is as much as to say, you are in the clanest house of the dirtiest city in the world."

"Grand Cairo!"

"Hush!" he replied, quickly, and placing his hand on my mouth. "Obey orders, Master Ned, and you shall just hear all about it. You see, a couple of days before we made the port of Boulac, as they call it in this place, your honor was thrown on your back with the fever."

"Ay, ay! I remember being taken ill, and that the doctor ordered me to keep my cabin."

"Mayhap you do, Master Ned: and it's glad that I am f it; because if your memory's shifted itself into position *ain*, you'll soon be as right as ninepence. But for all

that, just now you are under orders, and mustn't talk ; as for listening, if so be (as I said before, or, at least, meant to say) it's to *me*, why, it'll do you good. Well, you remember being taken bad ; but you don't remember that soon after that the doctor also was took bad, — ay, and *so* bad, that he shifted his quarters from this world, which you see was ill luck for the poor gentleman, as there was no doctor for him. Howsomever, as regards your honor I don't excuse him ; for, *being* a doctor, he'd no business to die till you got well : it was a sort of mutiny ; but there's no going agin facts, — he did go ill, and died too. After his death, I took on a great deal because he left no orders behind him for your tratement, which, seeing as how you couldn't give 'em yourself, was mighty ungentlemanly, the mane crature knowing I couldn't get you into position again as was my bounden duty."

"Poor, dear old Peter !" I murmured.

"Well, I don't know about that ; for, tho' I was, as the saying is, poor in regard of knowing about physic, I wasn't poor in regard of money, — at least so far as yours and mine together, — so I made bold to tell the skipper that I must go ashore and look out for a lodging and another doctor ; for, says I to meself, it's hard lines for the son of a gentleman, a rale gentleman himself, and a Queen's officer to boot, to be dying near a town where the big and little Pagans and haythens of all nations meet, and there was a dacent hotel, which I knew of my own knowledge, for I have been here before. Well, I came ashore and took *these* quarters ; for I heard there happened to be a doctor on the premises. It's true he's only a Scotchman ; but then, a doctor's a doctor ; and so I told him that a lieutenant in her Majesty's service, a rale gentleman, and of the princely blood of the O'Donnells, was like to die for

the want of the head-piece, and, mayhap, the drugs of the like of him."

"And he readily gave his aid, Peter," I said, tired of my servant's long story.

"Yes, Master Ned, that's the truth; but he must be a big wig among the Pagans here, for he had you brought ashore, insensible as you were, in spite of quarantine, and he has watched and attended you for the last seven days as if you had been his own brother."

"Kind, very kind; yet God always raises a friend in the hour of adversity. But," I added, "remove the curtains, Peter; give me light."

"Very sorry, Master Ned; but as the Doctor said he wouldn't answer for your life if I didn't obey his orders, I can't do it," replied Peter, stolidly.

"Spoken like a faithful fellow and an old soldier," said the Doctor himself, who had been in the room some minute or so without our knowledge. "We may, however," he added, "have a little light now;" and, so saying, he drew aside the curtains, and thereby exhibited to me a tall, gaunt, plain-featured Scotchman, whose *personnel* was not improved by a kind of semi-Asiatic, semi-European military uniform. Plain, however, as were his features, they were lighted up by a pair of twinkling, humorous eyes, that in an instant made me yearn to — well, at least shake him heartily by the hand: but I had still stronger reason to like him; so, holding out my hand, I said, "How can I thank you sufficiently, Doctor, for saving my life?"

"Halt there, my friend," he cried; "you'll just no thank me at all, but God, under whose providence I have perhaps been the means of robbing the fishes of a meal; for *certain* it is that in a few more hours they would have *thrown you overboard*. Nay," he added, checking the

reply upon my lips, "ye maun just hold your clack till you're something better than the mere remains of a man, which is all you are now."

"But, my dear Doctor, how long am I to remain in hospital?"

"If you'll just let weel alone, and permit Nature to carry on her repairs in her own quiet way, you may get upon your legs in a week, and have the full use of them in a fortnight; but you'll now keep a quiet tongue in your head, and not be interfering while the repairs *are going on*, or I'll not answer for the consequences."

"God bless you, Doctor, for those words!" said Peter; "and it wont be the nurse's fault if we don't show a clean bill of health in the half of a month's march."

Peter was right; in a fortnight I was on the highroad to convalescence, although such a mere scarecrow remnant of my former self that the donkey-boys of Cairo stared at the "English dog, and son of a dog," as I passed them in the streets, and even Peter dubbed me the "lieutenant's remains." But what human trouble or trial is there without its compensation in the shape of future good? So, during my recovery, I secured the friendship of Dr. McTow, late of the Bombay army, but then McTow, Bey, — Peter pronounced it McToby — Inspector-General of Hospitals in the service of the Viceroy of Egypt.

"You are just the most fortunate lad in the world to have turned the corner of that fever, and so we'll no mind your being a bit of a scarecrow," said the Doctor, one morning, when I had been lamenting the loss of my good looks.

"Then, Doctor, perhaps my luck has taken a turn for the better; for hitherto I have been but a mere shuttlecock *in the hands of fortune*."

"Nay, lad," he replied, "you maun no blame fortune ; for it's just possible your misfortunes — that is, if you have had any at all — have been your own bairns ; and you are o'er young yet to have learned that the heathen dame is but the scapegoat of man's own follies, misconduct, or inanity ; for under Providence there never was a more truthful proverb than ' Where there's a will there's a way ; ' and if you'll just listen, I will prove it in my own case, without boasting. My father," he continued, " was but a poor fisher of the town of Greenock, and all that he could do was to send me to a cottar's school, where the crumbs of learning to be picked up were but small ; but I warked and warked till I had learned enough for the doctor of the town to take me into his shop, and then I warked and warked my way up to dispense medicines, and in a few years had saved enough just to take me to the Glasgow University for a term. Out of term I went into the North Seas as a surgeon on board a whaler. With the money so earned — and it *was* hard-earned money, too — I completed my course at the university, and then went to my old friend the doctor, as assistant. Now, more than ever, I warked and warked again, till I had gained a reputation for industry, and that made my fortune ; for when the head of the medical department of the army in Scotland wanted a clerk who had some knowledge of physic, he applied to the Professor of Surgery at Glasgow University, and *I* was recommended. As medical clerk I again warked and warked till my chief, who wanted to do ' something ' for me, obtained me an appointment on the medical staff of the Bombay Presidency. There I stayed for ten years, and should have remained till now, but a breakdown in my *health* compelled me to go to England on sick leave. The *voyage alone, however*, did me so much good, that I had

been in England barely two months when I again shipped for Egypt, as chief of the Viceroy's medical staff, an appointment obtained for me by the interest of the Inspector-General of Hospitals. And now, my lad, you have the whole story of how a fisher-boy became a general officer — and a Bey, too — in the Egyptian service ; and, for the first time in his life, got more siller than kicks."

"Axin' your pardon, Doctor," said Peter, who had been attentively listening to the foregoing biography, "but I have heard that it is by boogie and boogie that Scotchmen wheedle themselves up the ladder of luck."

"Then," replied the Doctor, good-humoredly, "you have heard wrong. It's na by boogie and boogie, but by wark-ing and warking, and keeping a tight hold of their earnings, that Scotchmen and other people climb up that ladder."

True, compared with McTow, I was but a boy ; nevertheless, his words stung me to the quick. The Doctor was the representative of a life of self-reliance and self-denial, and well had he worked out his national proverb, "Every mickle maks a muckle ;" for the fisher-boy in his upward progress must have saved, or made the most of every minute of his time, as well as penny of his earnings, before he could have attained his then respectable position. Thus I replied :

"You, Doctor, have indeed reason to be proud ; your career has been one of steady, upward progress ; while mine, short as it has been, resembles the labors of Sisyphus."

"Na, you'll no mak' progress in life, lad, by flattery, at least among plain, honest folk ; and so just mak' short wark o' your compliments, and tell me how it is that a smart young sub in her Majesty's service comes to be in Grav

Cairo before he has had time to earn his 'leave,'—for I tak' it you are too smart a lad to be a 'Queen's hard bargain.' ”

“ ‘A Queen's hard bargain!’ ” I replied, warmly. “No, Doctor, I never shirked my duty ; but has not Peter told you that I have ‘sold out’ of the army ? ”

“ ‘Sold out!’ a lad of eighteen sell out ! Na, na, Peter never told me sic a thing, nor can I understand it noo,” he replied ; and, shaking his head, he added : “It's a bad beginning, lad, a verra bad beginning.”

“Come, come, Doctor ; it's not fair to judge until you have heard all. The fact is, that when I entered the army I had not a single shilling above the value of my commission and outfit ; thus the service was, as a profession, a means of getting my living. Recently, however, by the death of an uncle, I have inherited a not inconsiderable property, and as I have no one to please but myself, no necessity for devoting myself to a career in which I candidly confess there are too many restraints to please me, I have sold out.”

“And so you have inherited a fortune ? ” he replied, seriously ; and again shaking his head, added, “then I am verra, verra sorry to hear it ; it is na so healthy as to mak' one ; for at your age a full pocket keeps the head empty ; it's beginning at the wrong end ; you'll na know what to do with your time or money, — two of the verra warst things to be at the disposal of a lad of eighteen.”

“But I may yet adopt another profession, — the law, probably.”

“*Adopt*,” he repeated, almost spitefully ; “why, lad, you speak of the means by which honest men win their daily bread as if you were condescending to tak' charge for life of a beggar's brat ; but you'll no *adopt*, as you call it, you'll

just mak' a plaything of it, and use it, as a peacock does his tail, as an ornament to swagger with."

"By Jove, Doctor, but you *are* plain-spoken!" I said, just a little annoyed.

"Verra true," he replied, coolly; "for I dinna like to see a lad throw up his wark and tak' to idleness; and so you'll just forgive me if I have spoken my mind." Then taking up a double-barrelled Westley Richards rifle — and one of the best, too, that perhaps had ever been sent out of that celebrated maker's house — which Peter had brought into my room that morning after cleaning, he said: "You'll pardon me, but this is a verro good piece, at least if it does not belie its maker's name; and if you can spare it, I will tak' it at your own price, for it is just what I have been looking out for."

I was delighted at this, for it was an opportunity of repaying him for his attention during my illness. "My dear Doctor, I shall only be too happy if you will accept the piece. I have another in my baggage."

"Na, na, that wouldna be fair; it will be sufficient if you will part with it at the price it cost you, and a favor too; for neither in Cairo nor Alexandria shall I find such a friend and companion for my journey through the land of Prester John."

"Are you going to travel in Abyssinia?" I asked, with pleasant surprise; for a thought had just crossed my brain.

"Verra true, I am; yet not for the first time. The cause of my going noo was verro curious. Some weeks since, a noble of Habesh, which means Abyssinia, who had but just arrived in Grand Cairo, sent for me to attend him for a very severe and dangerous attack of" — the Doctor mentioned the disease; the name was, however, so learned *that I do not remember it.* "Yesterday I completed his

cure ; when, after expressing his gratitude, and making me some handsome presents, he told me that the prince, his master, had been suffering for a year from the same disease, and hearing that there was a wonderful medicine man — you see my reputation has travelled far — in Cairo, picked out this noble, who was suffering from a similar complaint, to come here and be experimented upon, and, if successful, to leave no means untried to ~~bring~~ with him back to court the medicine man."

"And you have agreed to undertake this perilous journey?" I asked.

"Verra true, I have ; not, however, only for the siller, but partly to gratify my passion as a naturalist, and partly as a diplomatic agent of the Viceroy of Egypt, who, indeed, upon that condition granted me leave of absence."

"One more question, Doctor, — will you permit me and my servant to accompany you?"

At this question the good man stared with astonishment.

"Bless the lad!" he cried — "is he mad? How is it possible that you, who have declared yourself too fine a gentleman to serve in a line regiment in India, can desire to undergo the fatigue and dangers of African travel, and that, too, through some of its densest forests, highest mountains, dreariest deserts, with the wildest of tribes and the savagest of beasts to your front, your rear, and upon your flanks? It is verra queer!"

"You have mistaken me, Doctor. I am restless under the monotonous restraints of the Indian Presidencies in times of peace ; but healthy, active excitement is necessary to my very existence. Come, say you will accept me for a companion? Naʻ, I will even now attempt to bribe you *with the Westley Richards.*"

For an instant the phlegmatic Scotchman again stared with astonishment ; then, with a quicker utterance than I had before observed, and almost in a state of excitement, he said, grasping my hand :

“Lieutenant O'Donnell, you'll mak' a warking man !” yet adding, with his usual nasal twang, “It's verra true, vera true, I *have* been mistaking you for a ne'er-do-weel.” Then stopping for a minute, as if to think, he suddenly jerked out, “My lad, I'll tak' all *three* of you !”

“Shure, Doctor, dear, then you'll have to find the other ; for me and the master can only muster two between us, if you make the most of the counting,” interposed Peter.

“Gang oot, ye loon ; do ye na call a real Westley Richards as good as either ?” replied the Doctor, laughing.

“Och, bother ! it's a Christian, then, that ye call the rifle !” replied Peter.

“Doctor,” I replied, returning his warm shake of the hand, “I am doubly delighted at my restoration to your good opinion, and at your permission to travel with you. But you called me O'Donnell ; I am an Englishman, and my name is Bevan — Ned Bevan, at your service.”

At this, the Doctor looked hard at, and pointed to Peter, as if intimating from whom he had learned my name ; whereupon that worthy personage, in self-defence, said :

“Shure, then, Master Ned, I did but tell the Doctor the truth ; for your mother, bless her, was an O'Donnell, and you'd have been an O'Donnell, too, as from the look of you you ought to have been, if your dear mother hadn't given you a father of the name of Bevan ; and as it wasn't your fault, you shant be robbed of your own family name if I can help it — for isn't it one that on'st called kings on their thrones brothers ? and whenever was there an O'Donnell

ashamed of his name? But now, your honor, I'll go and get tiffin ready."

"Verra queer creature that," observed the Doctor, as Peter quitted the room.

"Devoted to me," I said; "at least, next to the name of O'Donnell. The fact is, he and his father and his father's father were either in the immediate service of, or tenants of, my mother's family; consequently he has a mania for the name of my mother's family, and ignores both the law and the custom which compels me to assume my father's instead of my mother's name."

"As faithful as a Highland clansman," returned the Doctor. "But is he a good shot with the rifle?"

"Peter was one of the best in our regiment; moreover, he is as plucky as a lion."

"Verra good; then we shall find him useful among the hippopotami, lions, and hyenas, even if we pass smoothly through the savage tribes of the Highlands of Abyssinia. But now, my young friend, when will you be ready to start?"

"At beat of drum to-morrow, if you like."

"Na, na, it's not necessary; but I'll tell you what you'll do: you maun be ready by this day week, when the Arab boat leaves Boulac for Massawa. In the meantime you must save up your strength, for you'll want all you can get in store by then."

"But this Abyssinian chief — is *he* to be our travelling companion?"

"Ay, he is; but I dinna mean him to know anything about you nor Peter till we are all on board the boat; for it's possible he might think that three companions would not be so agreeable as one, and so forestall ye. Now I'll just go to the Governor, and get a letter to some of the *chiefs on our route.*"

Having once resolved upon a project, it is my habit at once to begin making the necessary preparations for carrying it out with all due effect. Now the two most desirable things requisite for a journey into the interior of Africa, I knew would be just the two I did not possess, namely, a good hunting-knife and a stock of powder ; thus when Peter came with the tiffin, shortly after the Doctor had taken his departure, I bade him ask the people of the hotel whether those things could be obtained, of first-rate quality, in Cairo, and, if so, where, or of whom ; but Peter stared at me as if he thought I had gone suddenly mad.

"Then, Master Ned," he said, "you were not poking fun at the Doctor. Bad luck to him for putting such a wild scheme into your head ?"

"No, Peter ; I have seriously determined to accompany him."

"Then, your honor, hadn't I better bring ye a quire of that big paper the Captain used to make out the company's accounts on ; for ye'll want it ?"

"What for ?"

"Just to make out your last will and testament ; for if you are going among them haythen Pagan cannibals, the Abyssinians, it'll be saving the lawyers in England trouble, and oblige your friends by letting 'em know how your money is to be divided among them !"

"Peter," I replied, "obey my orders, and that as quickly as possible. If *you* do not like, or are afraid, to go with me, why — take the next steamer for England."

"Master Ned, Master Ned," he replied, reproachfully, "if you were going to ould Nick himself I would follow — that is, if the ould fellow would admit the servant as well as the master, because we *might* find Christians there ; but to go among haythens and Pagans, and perhaps come

to be buried in the stomachs of cannibals, it's a braving of Providence! I can't abide it, Master Ned, I can't. I knew your mother, Heaven rest her, afore you were born; I enlisted in the same regiment when you got your commission; I have been in action by your side; when you left the army I let you buy me out, because you shouldn't go home by yourself; and after all, through this Dr. McToby, bad luck to him, instead of returning to the ould country and living upon our new fortune, as a gentleman and a gentleman's gentleman should live, we are going to put our heads into the mouths of haythen Pagan cannibals, — and, bedad, if what's said of 'em is true, a great deal worse; for don't they cut their rump steaks off of live cows, and leave the poor animals to grow the meat for them again, the mane bastes?"

"Peter, Peter, you are a donkey! You have been to a good school and ought to know better; you should rejoice at the opportunity of visiting such a people as the Abyssinians, who are not cannibals at all, but Christians of some centuries old, and, moreover, descended from the Queen of Sheba and the wise King Solomon."

"Do you mane *all* that, Master Ned?" he replied, with a reassured air.

"I do."

"Then, bedad," he replied, "if they have had such forbears as you say, barring there's a little too much of the Jew in 'em, they must be as respectable as if they had been born in dear ould Ireland, and I don't mind making their acquaintance. Faith, since they are Christians, it's like they have some rale ould whiskey among them, and we shall have to thank Dr. McToby after all!"

"I have little doubt of that; but now, Peter, go and in-

quire about the knife, — one with a good pig blade, like that I lost in India, and some best English powder.”

“All right, Master Ned : Pigou and Wilks’s — there’s none like it,” he replied, leaving the room with a much lighter heart than he had entered it. But I must now beg of my reader not to be surprised at Peter’s familiarity. In some families there still exists the good old custom of making servants your friends : such had been the case in connection with Peter’s family and mine ; and again, although my seinor by several years, he was my foster-brother. Then, as for his nondescript language, it was polyglot, and with reason. He gloried in Ireland as the finest country in the world ; but it was legendary, for Peter had never set foot in the green isle : his father was an Irishman, and his mother Scotch, both broad in their speech. As for Peter’s intellectual qualifications, all I can say is, that he had received a good village-school education, which, in conjunction with a keen observant faculty, had enabled him to make the most of his varied experience as household servant, sailor, and soldier ; for in each of those departments of life he had served. But his value may be generalized in the sentence, “a Jack of all trades, and master of none.” Yet in one line he excelled, namely, making a good bargain. Thus, having ferretted out a Jew who had purchased from some officer, either in his outward or homeward journey from India, a twelve-inch bladed case pig-knife, and a twenty-pound box of Pigou and Wilks’s powder, with caps and wads, he obtained them for a sum almost as small as I could have purchased them in London.

CHAPTER II.

WE SET SAIL.

PEOPLE accustomed to travel in the East require but a few hours' preparation for the longest journey; thus even the week we had to wait for the Arab boat that was to take us to Massawa seemed to pass very tediously. However, it did pass; and so one morning the Doctor, Peter, and I, having hired what has been called the "cab" of Egypt, — that is, a donkey, and a donkey-boy, — found ourselves gliding, for we went at no greater pace, through that, to the European who has never read or has forgotten his "Arabian Nights," oddest of cities, Grand Cairo, with its streets so narrow that the gayly-decked houses seem to be kissing each other at their tops. Yet scoff not at them; for that which would be a grave fault in England, in Egypt is the greatest protection from the burning sun. Then what a polyglot population we had to force our way through, — Turks, Arabs, Persians, Jews, Armenians, Moors, Berbers, Abyssinians, and Europeans! What a discordant jabber of tongues! What quaint costumes! — the swarthy and almost nude camel drivers; ladies *yashmak'd*, — that is, swathed, like mummies, till nothing but their eyes and slippers were to be seen; old Turks, with huge turbans and beards of patriarchal dimensions, but sitting at their shop windows with a dignified air, and their *legs crossed*, regarding with something akin to contempt

their younger countrymen as they passed in their nondescript, semi-Europeanized attire, smart fezzes, and black braided, chocolate-colored jackets and trousers; then the peasant women, clad in blue, and carrying upon their heads their water-jars; — truly, it was a scene not easily to be forgotten; for until then I had not witnessed it, as nearly the whole of the time I had been at Cairo I had been confined to the hotel. Neither shall I forget the donkey-boys, who, as a class, are as impudent and full of mischief as their brethren of the streets of London and Paris. But these worthies have been described by Mr. Mansfield Parkins, who relates an amusing adventure that happened to him with one of them.

Desiring to get a little harmless fun out of their habit of *double entendres*, Mr. Parkins upon one occasion hired one of them, of course shamming total ignorance of their language (Arabic), in which, by the way, he was a proficient. But this gentleman shall tell his own story:

“ I addressed a boy, beginning my conversation (as all Englishmen are *supposed* to do) with a strongish expletive, and continuing my inquiry in very bad English, like all Englishmen, in the idea, I suppose, that because the natives speak a broken language, they will digest it better if broken up ready for their use. The bait took, as the boy's answer convinced me. ‘ Here, master, *you* one very good jackass.’ We went a long ride down to Shoubra gardens (I was then at Boulac), and the boy kept up, with the gravest possible face, a desultory conversation of the following nature. (The words in italics are supposed to be said in Arabic). The donkey stumbles.

“ ‘ You, boy, your donkey not good at all ! ’

“ ‘ Yes, master, him berry good — *better than his rider.*’

“ ‘ Go on fast ! ’

“ ‘Yés, master, a-a-a’ (with a dig causing a wriggle) — (to ass) ‘*Get on Christian, son of a Christian, ridden by a Christian — ass, son of an ass, ridden by an ass — kàfir (infidel), son of a kàfir, ridden by a kàfir!*’ and then, perhaps, he would amuse himself and the passers-by with a roundelay of the following signification:

“ ‘Nusseràni, kelbowani,
Akal el helwa, wa khallàni
Aho, el Nusseràni.’

“ ‘Christian, blind dog,
Ate the sweet thing, and left me.
Here he is, the Christian.’

“ ‘That’s a very nice song. What does it say?’

“ ‘All ’bout master and donkey — berry good; me behind, with stick, make’m go. Master give me shilling, me sing him song again!’ Then he would perhaps give the donkey a spiteful dig under the tail, thereby eliciting a kick, while at the same time he would express a wish (in Arabic) that the stick in his hand were a *khason* (or impaling post), dedicated to the especial elevation of the ass and his rider. So we went on for a long time (the parts of the conversation I have selected are the few which would bear printing in English), till at last, as fortune would have it, I was recognized by a Turkish friend of mine, who addressed me in Arabic. Not wishing to appear to cut him, I answered; but first got a good hold of my follower, which interrupted him in a most benevolent expression of the kind manner in which he would like to treat all the members of my family, enumerating each one in succession, from my great-grandfather and his respected lady downwards, intermingling them in a most facetious manner with the ancestry of the animal I bestrode. ‘*You would, would you, you son of a dog?*’ said I, turning round,

and seizing him. 'And now that I have you in my power, what shall I do with you?'

"To this of course were added one or two of the rather strong Turkish expressions intelligible to an Arab of Egypt. The change in the boy's face was so amusing that I could scarcely forbear from laughing. My friend also came up and joined in the fun. The boy was all prayers and entreaties. I gave him a few kicks, and, having taken off my veil, and given him the umbrella to carry, we returned home. On the way back, both donkey and driver behaved remarkably well. After paying the boy his just dues, and not a para more, which he received without a grumble, I administered a few more kicks, and then gave him a shilling for the amusement he had afforded me."

Upon reaching the harbor of Boulac, we were agreeably surprised to find, that, instead of the usual *dahabra*, or Arab boat, with her two lateen sails, her bows dangerously near the water, and her after-part ridiculously high out of it, we were to make the voyage in a two-decked vessel of European build, and of which, by the way, the *Rais* or captain seemed very proud, notwithstanding her very obvious age and leaky state: but then she was *all his own*, purchased by his own savings; and so, perhaps, we may not blame him. Then, as for her interior, it was scarcely less picturesque — although infinitely much dirtier and more unpleasant to the sense of smell — than the streets of Cairo. She was heavily laden with bales, boxes, rice-bags, and luggage belonging to the passengers, who crowded her decks by day, and slept in crevices or openings between the packages by night. Among the latter were Mahometan Abyssinians returning from the shrine of the Prophet at Mecca, natives of Massawa, merchants of Jidda, — indeed, *what with Turks, Egyptians, English, Scotch, Irish, French,*

Bedouins, negroes, and members of the many wild tribes of Abyssinia, with their varied languages, manners, religions, and costumes, it required but a small effort of the imagination to believe that the vessel was a kind of modern Noah's ark, conveying sample patterns of every nationality of an old world for the peopling and settlement of some new world, discovered perhaps by the Rais; but he, poor, attenuated, elderly, nervous little Mussulman, *did not* give one the notion of being a Columbus!

Now, our position in this floating Babel was favorable in the extreme by comparison with others; for the Doctor, in consideration of perhaps a larger sum than the Rais had ever before received for a dozen passengers, and two shares of which I had paid, had secured for our comfort and accommodation one of the only two deck-cabins; the other being hired for the use of the Abyssinian *Dejatch* (chief), Gosho. *Propos* of this illustrious personage, he had become the cause of much confusion and grumbling *before* he came on board: and not without reason; for when the long-murmured discontent and impatience of the passengers had just begun to break out into something like an uproar, we had been waiting seven hours for his Abyssinian lordship. At sunset, however, the passengers became appeased, the cause of the delay being then known. The *Dejatch* was *carried* on board by his attendants. He had, when on the very point of starting, been seized with a sudden and severe attack of the complaint for which *McTow* had before treated him, and that, too, so successfully, that, as we have seen, the chief had, by dint of much persuasion and a good sum of "siller" down, engaged our Scotch friend to accompany him to the court of his sovereign, upon whom he hoped to effect a similar *cure*.

"Verra queer, for the man was healing fast," muttered the Doctor, as he left our cabin to visit his patient, and evidently much discomfited by the chief's relapse.

"Master Ned," said Peter, "it'll be hard by Doctor McToby if he loses his pattern card before he gets to the end of the voyage."

"His what?"

"Shure, then, and isn't this Ditch (Peter's pronunciation of Dejatch), as they call the nigger chief, the Doctor's pattern card, that he's taking to the black king, just to show the cure he's made of him, that he may get an order to *wark, wark* (here Peter imitated the Doctor) upon his Majesty's own royal corpse?"

"*Corpus*, Peter, not 'corpse!' for a doctor to prescribe for a dead body would, as the Chinese say, be as useless as to throw water upon a duck's back."

"Faith, Master Ned," he replied, "what matter the words if the maning's the same? But," he added, "it's a false alarm; his lordship the Ditch is all right. Here comes the Doctor."

"All right!—it's verra far from all right; it's all wrong," said McTow, adding, as he opened his medicine chest, "The man's dying; he has poisoned himself. The case was going on verra weel, but the ass has swallowed the lotion I prescribed for his legs!"

"But *will* he die?" I asked, not, I must confess, from any sympathy with the poor Abyssinian, but fearing that in that event there would be an end to our journey into Abyssinia.

"It will be only by a miracle if he lives another day," replied the Doctor; but he would stay no longer from his patient, and so left us. To make, however, a long story short, the poor chief lingered in great agony for three

days, when death released him from his sufferings, and his body was buried in the Red Sea.

"Now, Doctor," I said, rather mournfully, an hour or so after the funeral, "I suppose you will leave the vessel at Jidda, and take the first Arab boat on her return to Cairo."

"Eh, mon!" replied the Doctor, quickly, "do ye tak' me for a robber? Didna I tell ye I had touched the siller, and do ye think I'd shirk the wark? Na, na; we'll just go on our way, and cure the master, just the same as if the man hadna made sic a fool of himself with the lotion."

Now, the death of a passenger at so early a period in the voyage had damped the spirits of nearly all on board, for it was regarded as ominous of coming evil; nevertheless, we proceeded on our course for eight days without meeting any mishap. About midnight, however, of the ninth, we were aroused from our slumber by cries of—

"FIRE! FIRE! WATER! WATER!"

In a few minutes the upper deck became crowded almost to suffocation with the frantic passengers; all swearing, or bellowing like buffaloes, instead of endeavoring to arrest the fire, which had broken out in the stern.

"If ye would stop your screeching, and just tak' to warking with the pails and buckets, you cowardly loons, you might have a chance of saving your miserable lives," cried the Doctor, forcing his way towards the flames, bucket in hand.

"Collect all the powder, and throw it overboard!" cried the Rais to his crew.

And the latter had no trouble upon that score; for packet after packet was tossed overboard. Now, I heard this order while I was helping McTow to douse the flames, *and became in fear* for my stock of powder in the box;

the more so, that I knew there was more smoke than fire, and more fire than danger. The fact was, that, the man at the helm having gone to sleep at his post, the flame of the binnacle light, which was burning in a little wooden box, caught the paper which surrounded the compass; the flame then fastened on some sails which were lying near, and hence the alarm. Then I ran towards the waist of the ship, where I knew my box of powder had been placed; and a scene, which *might* have had very serious results, presented itself. The powder-box, for greater security, had been placed at the very bottom, beneath a little mountain of sacks, so tightly wedged and packed together, that, for anything like a quick removal, many hands were necessary. Knowing this, the Rais, in his terror, had cried aloud that *hundredweights* of powder were beneath the sacks; whereupon the good Mahometans, not caring to be sent out of the world so unceremoniously, had responded to the Rais' call, and were endeavoring to get at my powder. But Peter, having discovered the small cause there was for alarm, and, like an old soldier and traveller, knowing to the full the value of gunpowder in a savage land, had seized a couple of handspikes, and, mounting the bags, there stood, a living statue upon a pedestal whose base was surrounded by enemies terrified at the vehemence with which, while turning round like a teetotum, so as to show front to all, he was going through a kind of double lance exercise, and that, too, with the dexterity only of one who had been trained as a lancer.

"By the powers!" he was roaring, — for when Peter desired to impress anything upon a man, or men, of whose language he knew not one word, and who knew naught of his, he raised his voice to the highest possible pitch, — "by the powers," he cried, "if you attempt to move the

bags, I'll send every man of you to sup with Davy Jones, or the sharks, as your luck may be! Get out wid ye, dirty cowards! every black rogue among ye!" Then he would add, as the enemy's gestures subsided a little, "Get to your work, like men. It's a burning shame ye should let their honors, the Lieutenant and the Doctor, be saving your lives for ye." Then, three or four of the crew, not liking to risk their carcasses, had tried to accommodate the matter by dousing the bags with water, hoping thereby that enough might get into the box to spoil the contents; they succeeded, however, in throwing only two buckets. As they advanced with others, Peter, exclaiming, "What! you'd make three-water grog of our powder, would ye, ye divils!" dexterously brought the handles of his spikes, one after the other, upon the water-carriers, sending them howling and sprawling upon deck.

It was at this moment that I reached the spot. Had there been one drop of blood shed among these fierce races, I would not have answered for our lives. But, fortunately, with Peter and his assailants, as at the other end of the ship, there had been more smoke than fire, more alarm than danger. Thus, when the Rais himself told them that the two kafirs (infidels), meaning the Doctor and I, had put out the fire, their escape from so fearful an accident as a fire at sea put them in such good humor that they laughed at Peter's defence as a good joke.

"Weel, Peter, mon," said the Doctor, joining us, "you should have learned the proverb, 'A wilful man should be unco wise.' Here have you been trying to throw awa' three Christian lives just to save a pound or two of powder; surely, it's weel said that 'The deil's bairns all have their daddy's luck.'"

"The devil is no father of mine, whoever your own may

be," replied Peter, surlily; "and, clever as you are, Doctor, before we set foot in Christian land again, you'll find, in small doses for wild beasts and savages, gunpowder is better neat than watered, as ours would have been but for my wilfulness, as you call it."

"You were, indeed, *too* hard with my brave Peter," said I, breaking a lance in favor of the latter.

"Na, na," replied the Doctor, good-humoredly, and holding forth his hand, "I meant not to offend you, mon; so shake hands, and let 'bygones be bygones.'"

"Faith, Doctor," cried Peter, delighted at McTow's affability, "you're a gentleman, every inch of you!" and so those two who were to be companions through some very rough adventures became better friends than ever: and well that it was so, for all our sakes; for had either of the three been at variance with one or both the others, like an arch without the keystone the fabric of our adventures would have tumbled to pieces. And here let me tell my readers, or any among them who would "rough it" in the wilds, that where all the party are Britons, the conventional difference between masters and servants, as known in civilized life, must, if only for mutual safety, be considerably mollified.

Now, as soon as the danger of being burned to death, drowned, or blown up by gunpowder had passed away, the Rais became again a brave man, and bethought himself of the necessity of making an example of the helmsman, who, by sleeping at his post, had endangered the ship and its contents. Thus he ordered the man to be brought before him.

"Dog, and son of a dog!" he said, pulling the ends of his moustache, and shaking a cane in the poor fellow's face, "what hast to say, that shall save the soles of thy

miserable feet from a hundred blows, as a punishment for sleeping at the very helm ? ”

“ Noble Rais,” exclaimed the trembling wretch, at the same time that he glanced first over one shoulder and then over the other, as if supplicating the aid of some invisible personage, — “ noble Rais, if it be thy will, thy servant *must* suffer ; but — but — ”

“ But — but — what, dog ? ” exclaimed the irate Rais.

“ But — but ” (again looking over his shoulder) — thy servant is not a dog that he should forget his duty. I — I didn’t do it.”

“ Didn’t do it, dog ? How — what words are these ? Art throwing dirt at us again ? ” said the Rais.

“ As Allah be his witness, thy servant did not sleep. He swooned, only swooned with fright — at — at — ” then, almost in a breath, as if to get the words forth with the utmost speed, he added, “ at the ghost — of the Abyssinian Dejatch who died on board ! ”

“ Allah be praised ! the Prophet forbid ! ” cried the bystanders ; and half a hundred faces became pale as death, half a hundred people groaned.

The Rais was frightened, quite as much so as any person on board (you will remember that the Abyssinian’s death was regarded at the time as ominous of evil) ; but to preserve discipline it was necessary he should make some show of his power and dignity ; so, shaking the man by the shoulders, he said, very fiercely, “ Dog, thou art pulling our beards — throwing dirt upon us : thou art lying ! ”

“ The Prophet forbid ! ” exclaimed the man ; adding with more confidence, as he saw the effect of his announcement in the faces of the bystanders. “ It — it — the ghost — *sat upon the bowsprit.* ”

"That just proves it to be all a lee," observed the Doctor, laughing; "for it would be an uncanny ghost that would tak' up its berth upon a bowsprit at midnight when it had paid for its passage all through, and that too in the very best cabin."

But no joke did the Rais and his passengers make of the matter; for, impressed by the man's manner of the truth of his statement, they, at least all who were Mussulmans, called upon the Prophet and muttered a prayer. The Rais then set the poor fellow at liberty, only ordering him to take the helm again that night, and in the event of his ghostship making his appearance; to alarm the whole ship.

"An artful rogue, that," said I, as we entered our cabin; "he has saved his feet by practising upon the superstitious terrors of the Rais."

"Na, na; you are wrang, my friend. The poor fellow was right; he spoke the truth. By the muscles of his face I could see that he was just more frightened than any of those around!"

"But not by a ghost, — surely you do not believe in ghosts?"

"Na, na," he replied, quite seriously; "I believe in no sic thing, except it be in the shape of our own conscience. The lang and the short of the matter is, the poor fellow has been frightened by one of those deils o' water-rats."

"Water-rats?"

"Ay, wi' two legs! I mean small pickpocket, area-sneak kind o' pirates; there are swarms of them in the sea. They prowl about in small boats at a lang distance, and are constantly on the lookout for vessels asleep. They play their pranks chiefly at night, but also in the daytime, if a craft is becalmed, and the crew, as they often are at

such times, off their guard; and they approach by swimming under water upon goat-skins. When they succeed in sneaking on board, they just lay their hands upon portable trifles. Now, it's my opinion, lad, that it was one of these rogues who frightened our helmsman."

"Supposing it be so, I wonder whether the fellow will make another attempt to-night," I said.

"It's very likely, indeed."

"I will lie in ambush for him."

"And what use will it be to you if you catch him, lad? You might do the creature some harm, but you'll be doing no more good for the public than if ye were to catch one out of a whole cloud of locusts."

"It would, at least, be something to prove to the foolish, superstitious people on board that the ghost was no ghost — nothing but a small thief."

"You'll have to eat mickle more porridge, lad, before you can squeeze the superstition out of the like of these, as the angel did the black spots out of the heart of their prophet. What's bred in the bone can't be got out of the flesh. Did you never read the story told by my countryman, Bruce, of the ghost that appeared to the crew of the ship in which he was making the same voyage? — but na, I see you don't know it, and so I'll just repeat it, to the best of my memory.

"Weel, a man who died on board, and had been buried ashore, had been seen upon the bowsprit two nights, and had frightened all the sailors half out of their wits. The Rais was no less alarmed, although he could not say he had himself seen the spirit; so one night he entered the cabin of Bruce, who was in bed, and complained seriously to him of the bad consequences it would produce if a gale of wind was to rise while the ghost was sitting on the

bowsprit; further begging the traveller would come forth and remonstrate with his ghostship. 'My good Rais,' replied Bruce, 'I am very tired, and my head aches much with the sun, which has been very violent to-day. You know, also, the man paid for his passage; and if he does not overload the ship, — and you know he would be lighter as a ghost than a man, — neither you nor I can in justice or equity hinder him from continuing his voyage, as we cannot judge what serious business he may have to transact upon his arrival.'

"'Allah forbid that I should know anything of his affairs!' cried the Rais, repeating a verse of the Koran.

"'Then,' continued Bruce, 'if you do not find he makes the vessel too heavy, do not molest him; because, certainly, if he were to come into any other part of the ship, or if he were to insist on being in the midst of you, he would be a greater inconvenience than in his present post.'

"' *Bismilla sheitan rejem!* ' (in the name of God keep the devil from me) exclaimed the Rais, at such a notion. 'Well, then, Rais,' continued Bruce, 'if the poor ghost does us no harm, you will let him ride upon the bowsprit till he is tired, or till he comes to Massawa; for I swear, unless he hurts or troubles me, I do not think I have occasion to get out of my bed to molest him. But see that he carries nothing away.'

"'Am I a dog, the son of a dog,' exclaimed the Rais, in anger, 'that I should care more for my life than any other man on board? No; if it were not for fear of a gale of wind, ghost or no ghost, he might ride on the bowsprit and be burned. My father's son would have asked no favor of the Frank, had he not been told that learned people could have speech with ghosts.'

"'Come, come, Rais; don't be offended,' replied Bruce;

'but be good enough to step forward and tell the ghost that I am going to drink coffee, and should be glad if he will walk into the cabin and chat with *me*, if he be a Christian; if not, with my servant Mahomet Gibberti.'

"This was enough. The Rais left the cabin, and proposed to Mr. Bruce's servant to carry the invitation; but the latter declined, and so the affair ended in smoke."

"I do not think much of the story: there's but little in it," said I, disappointed. "I supposed that it had a more romantic, or at least humorous ending."

"Verra true, there *is* but leetle in it, but that leetle's good; for it shows that the people of to-day are as superstitious as their forefathers of Bruce's time."

"Well, well, Doctor, ghost or thief, or both, I will find out;" and at once I sought the helmsman, and, putting a Maria Theresa dollar in his hand, promised to repeat the gift, providing that, should the ghost again appear that night, he would hear, see, and say nothing.

CHAPTER III.

GHOST-HUNTING.

THREE successive nights Peter and I lay hidden among bread-bags and water-casks in the bow ; but no spirit appeared. A few of the other passengers had also kept watch ; but, mark you, at a respectful distance, as if to be near enough to *see*, yet far enough, as they believed, not to bring themselves within the influence of the brimstony halo, traditionally supposed to accompany such supernatural visitors. But after the third night, delighted at their disappointment, they literally gave up the ghost.

On the fourth night, therefore, Peter and I looked forward to having the disembodied Abyssinian all to ourselves. As for the Doctor, he would have naught to do, "wi' sic nonsense."

"Oh ! I see, Doctor," I said, hazarding a joke, "you have no faith in any spirit but whiskey."

"Verra true, lad," he replied. "I dinna believe in sic like cattle ; and if it be a thief, why, I am not a policeman, and so I'll just trouble my head with my own affairs alone."

"Shure, Doctor," said Peter, "you put me in mind of the *feelossopher* who, when the servant in alarm informed him that his house was on fire, bade him go tell his mistress, since *he* never troubled himself with household affairs !"

"Hush!" I whispered, as, about half an hour after Peter and I had been stooping down between the bread-bags, he sneezed.

"How can I help it, Master Ned? Shure, the ghost must be coming, for it's the brimstone that's tickling me nose."

"Brimstone or no brimstone, *something* is coming," I replied, pointing with my finger to a heap of empty rice-sacks which for the last few minutes had been heaving upwards.

"Them bags is alive!" he replied, starting a little. "See!" he added, in a whisper, "*there's* a bit of the ghost; that round thing's a head, isn't it?"

Peter was right; a head had come up, something like a sweep's out of a chimney-pot, with the exception that, instead of rattling a brush, it moved slowly around, like a Chinese mandarin in a grocer's shop window.

"Them's savage eyes, tho', for a sperret," murmured Peter, as the great black orbs sparkled beneath the moonlight.

The head continued to move round for a minute or two, the eyes glaring in every direction, and the ears, first one and then the other, turned as if to catch the slightest sound.

"Shall we crack the nut at once, and see what the kernel's like?" whispered Peter, placing his hand upon his revolver. "It wont be murder; because, your honor, if it's a ghost, he wont feel it!"

"But if it is not? Hush!—not even a whisper!" I replied.

The head then disappeared; but a minute after, the bags moved very slowly, softly aside, and from the mouth of a large cask it again came forth, but this time bringing with it body, arms, legs, and all the etceteras that help to make *up the human figure*.

"The cratur's complete entirely now," whispered Peter.
"Hush!"

The figure then glided slowly towards a water-cask, and, lifting the lid, using its hands as a cup, began to drink.

"Shure, now, it's a thirsty sperret. Don't disturb the poor cratur," whispered Peter.

"Hush!"

Having slaked its thirst, the figure replaced the lid, and opening a bread-bag, helped itself to cakes.

"Sperret or no sperret, it's a big thief, that's shure," said Peter.

"Hush, Peter! I see it all: it is some poor wretch who has smuggled himself on board to get a free passage."

"By the powers, then, Master Ned, we have been thirsty and hungry ourselves before now; so we'll just keep the poor cratur's secret, or the niggers on board here will be after making a rale ghost of him. But, botheration to him, why did he go and distil himself into a sperret, just to give us all this trouble?"

"We must do more, Peter: we must get him into our cabin, and let him share our rations — at least, until I can bribe the Rais to be civil to him."

"But *how* will we catch the cratur without making it squeak, and alarm the whole ship?" replied Peter, who, by the way, you will remark by his words, did not feel quite sure that our new acquaintance was *bona fide* flesh and blood. "Shall I," he added, "just step softly up to it, and speak in a baby's whisper?"

"In what language, Peter?"

"Botheration! I never thought of the language," he replied; "but may be, being a sperret, he's a poly — what do ye call 'em that understands all lingos?"

"Well," I said, "follow me, and I will speak to him in

Arabic." So, slipping off my boots, I stepped forth towards the ghost, who was now sitting upon the deck, with his back turned towards us. Guess, however, our surprise, when, just as I was about touching his shoulder, he turned, and, looking me full in the face, said, in very good English:

"Good, brave English gentleman, you will not betray an unfortunate, who, although now an outcast and a beggar was once noble in his own land, and who, like yourselves, is a believer in our blessed Redeemer."

"Good luck to us, Mr. Ghost; then you are a Christian? but it's lucky the sperrets in your country, wherever it may be, spakes English."

"Hush, Peter." Then to the ghost I said, "You overheard our conversation?"

"Enough only to know that friends, like angels, had been hovering near the poor outcast."

"Well, well," I whispered; "no more now. Follow us as softly as you can, but without fear;" and, Peter and I walking abreast, the poor fellow followed us into the cabin without being observed even by the helmsman at the other end of the vessel, who, having but a little labor that calm night, for the sea was as smooth as glass, was listening to the gossip or story-telling of the only two of his shipmates on deck.

"Softly! — do not wake the Doctor," I whispered, as, entering the cabin, I heard his loud snoring.

"Faith," said Peter, "there's little fear; he's too busy driving his pigs to market."

"You're wrang, mon; dinna ye ken that an old traveller always sleeps with but one eye closed?" replied the medico, sitting up, and endeavoring to shake himself wide awake. "But, Heaven bless us!" he added, with a shudder, as by the glimmering light of the lantern which hung of a

night in the cabin he observed our companion — “where did the lad pick up this nut-colored scarecrow?”

“The jintleman’s the *ghost*, Doctor, dear; and, barring that he’s half-starved, a very civil sperret in his way!”

“*Eh, mon!*” exclaimed the Doctor, opening his eyes to their widest, and almost as much frightened as would have been the Rais or any of his countrymen, “the gude Lord save us from imps and all sic supernaturals!”

“I thought you did not believe in ‘*sic like cattle!*’” said I.

“Verra true; I dinna,” he replied, recovering his self-possession. “But, lad, where did you pick the creature up? — how did he get on board?”

“That you must ask him. He speaks English.”

“Faith, Doctor, dear, he came headforemost out of the bread-bags,” said Peter.

“Brave Aito,”¹ said the ghost, “I am a noble of Habesh (Abyssinia), who, having been sold into slavery, escaped from my master to Grand Cairo, and, being penniless, endeavored to return to my native land by hiding myself in a water-cask, in which I have been ever since the ship sailed from Boulac.”

“But, mon alive, how did ye exist?” asked the Doctor. “In my country they dinna keep spirits in water.”

“By coming out of the cask at night, when all was quiet on board, and taking bread from the bags and water from the casks.”

“Did you ever hear of a good sperret that wasn’t spoiled by being mixed with water?” interrupted Peter.

“Verra weel,” replied the Doctor; “then you’re just what I took ye for when I heard you were a ghost, — a thief o’ the night. You were not contented to steal a pas-

¹ “Aito,” in the Amharic tongue, is equivalent to the English Mr. or Sir.

sage, but you must just go robbing the Rais of his bread and fresh water. Hoot, mon — I'm ashamed of ye!"

"Nonsense, Doctor," I said; "the theft was necessary to keep the poor fellow alive."

"Na, lad; there was just no necessity for his living at all: an honest dead man is better than a live rogue, any day o' the week."

"Botheration, Doctor! it 'ud be a mighty clever dead man that could take to picking and stealing, barring he wasn't a ghost!"

"Hoot, mon, hoot!" replied the Doctor. Then again addressing the ghost, — for so I must still call him, for as yet we knew him by no other name, — "I believe it's just all a lee, and that you are no better than a water-rat; for you must have known that your countryman, the Dejatch Ogo-sho, was about to sail in this vessel, and he would have secured you a passage."

"The Dejatch," replied the other, proudly, "was the enemy of me and mine. *Had* he lived, I would have starved to death in the cask from which I have escaped rather than have fallen into his hands. "But," he added, "if you believe not the word of a Christian, and dare compel these noble gentlemen, who have promised to befriend me, to eat their words, give me over to the Rais and his miserable crew, who, being followers of the Prophet, will rejoice in the destruction of one who in their eyes will be both thief and kafir (infidel)."

"Verra true; it *is* something in your favor that you are a Christian; but it's just another reason that you should have kept your fingers out of honest men's bread-bags."

"Doctor, dear," said Peter, "hadn't you better just put *yourself* in the scales, and see if there isn't an ounce or

two less of good in you than there ought to be in a good Christian, before you talk like this to a poor devil. But," he added, good-humoredly, and I may add truthfully, "you are poking fun at us; you are just turned the wrong side outwards, and it's showing the worst part that you are. It must have been the other side that behaved like the good Samaritan to Master Ned here, when he was down with the fever."

"Peter is right, Doctor; you are falsifying your own heart. But come, you and Peter help the poor fellow to some of our rations, while I, to prevent further mischief to him, go and offer to pay the Rais for his passage to Massawa."

"Verra weel," replied the Doctor; "you can do as you like wi' your siller; so just go and mak' an *honest* man of the fellow, by paying his passage-money; and when he has told us the whole of his tale, I may just turn what you call my ither side towards him — that is, if he deserves it; but remember, lad, 'Muckle promisers are ill performers.'"

I then proceeded to the Rais' cabin. He was in a sound sleep; but a good shaking, however, awoke him. "Rais," I said, "don't be frightened: the ship's not on fire, neither have we been boarded by pirates."

"Then, in the name of the Prophet, why has the Frank officer brought his servant out of that earthly paradise, sleep?" he said, still rubbing his eyes.

"I have caught the ghost!"

"*Bismilla sheitan rejem!*" (In the name of God, keep the devil far from me) he exclaimed, with ricketty knees and chattering teeth.

"Yes, Rais; he is now in our cabin, where we have invited him to remain till we reach Massawa."

"Allah preserve us! — the Franks are born demons!" he cried, more alarmed than ever; and, calling to a sailor, he bade him search among the passengers for a holy man and beg of him to exorcise the ghost.

Having carried the joke far enough, I then told him the real state of the case; and hearing that the man had smuggled himself on board, and had been existing upon his bread and water, he swore several good, round, Mahometan oaths, and promised to have him bastinadoed to death. And doubtless he would have kept his word to the letter but for my offer to pay as large a sum for his passage as I had paid for my own, when he at once began to sympathize with the poor fellow's misfortunes, whatever they might be. This important affair being arranged, I returned to the cabin, and sat down with the Doctor and the ghost to a substantial breakfast of coffee, fruits, and chicken, after which the ghost related to us the following history of his adventures.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GHOST: HIS LIFE AND ADVENTURES.

WITH head erect, flashing eyes, and a really noble demeanor, the ghost thus began his story :

"I have said that I am noble in my own land. I am more — even of kingly blood ; for I am of that race which alone has the privilege of giving the King of kings to the throne of Ethiopia."

"Then I tak' it, sir," interrupted the Doctor, who entertained the true Highland veneration for ancient blood, "you are a Falasha — a Jew ?"

"Faith, Doctor, dear, who ever heard of a Royal Highness being a Jew ?" put in Peter.

"You'll just not put a spoke in the wheel at all, Peter, but hand your tongue," replied the Doctor, angrily.

"I am not a Falasha, but a Christian, like yourself," replied the Abyssinian ; "nevertheless, I am a descendant of Solomon the King, and the Queen of Sheba."

"But pardon me," I said ; "at the risk of interrupting you, I must ask, who, what are the Falashas ?"

"Ye are right, lad," replied the Doctor ; "it will be best to begin at the beginning ; moreover, we may chance to meet the tribe, and so I will tell you all I have heard of them.

"Weel, then," he continued, "the Falashas (the word comes from the Ethiopic *falas*, and signifies exile) are just

the Jews of Abyssinia, though at what time they first reached that country is not known. They have a legend that it was in the reign of Magueda, Queen of Sheba; and this is how it happened: Her Majesty had heard from merchants and traders of the wisdom and magnificence of King Solomon, and, fired with the glowing accounts, determined to visit him. This she did; and her peerless beauty and great wisdom and accomplishments won for her the favor and friendship of the famous monarch; so, after a long sojourn in Jerusalem, she returned to her own dominions, laden with presents, and, what greatly enhanced her happiness, with a youthful heir and prince, her son Menilek. The great friendship between these two mighty rulers was made still more lasting by religious sympathy. In the train of the Queen, besides a number of distinguished Jews from every tribe, was Azariah, the son of the High Priest Zadok, to whom the pious parents had openly intrusted the education of Menilek, and the guardianship of the *tabor*, or transcript of the law. And so great was the zeal of these emigrants, that in a few years the worship of the God of Israel had almost supplanted the idolatries of Ethiopia. And now," said the Doctor, in conclusion, "I have told you all I ever heard of these people."

"And we may not doubt its truth," said the Abyssinian, piously inclining his head. Before, however, repeating his own interesting story, I will give you the opinion of a recent very observant traveller and clever writer¹ about these curious people. Writing of the first settlement of the Jews in Abyssinia, he says: "The most probable conjecture is, that, at a very early period, perhaps when Solo-

¹ "Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia." By the Rev. H. A. Stern.

mon's fleet navigated the Red Sea, some adventurous Jews, impelled by love of gain, settled among the pleasant hills of Arabia Felix, whilst others of a more daring and enterprising spirit were induced to try their fortune in the more remote, though not less salubrious, mountain scenes of Ethiopia. The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, whether she reigned over both or only one of those countries, is an incontestable proof that the wise king's fame had spread far beyond his own empire.

"To subjects of a monarch so renowned for wisdom, wealth, and power, a gracious reception was, no doubt, everywhere accorded, and the new settlers, in their prosperity abroad, probably soon forgot the attractions of their home in Judea. Subsequent troubles in Palestine, and the final overthrow of the Jewish monarchy by Nebuchadnezzar, increased the number of the emigrants; and in the lapse of a few centuries the Jews formed a powerful state in Arabia, and a formidable and turbulent people in the Alpine regions between Tigré and Amhara in Ethiopia.

"The legend of *Menilek*, and the supposed descent of the Abyssinian sovereigns from the line of Solomon, unquestionably exercised a salutary influence in favor of the Jews, and contributed more than anything else towards the spread of those Mosaical rites and ceremonies which to this day are still so extensively engrafted on the Christianity of the country. On the promulgation of the gospel, the Jews, who had now become scattered all over the western plains of Tschelga and Dembea, retired again to their mountain fastnesses of Semeon and Bellesa, where, under their own kings and queens, they maintained till the beginning of the seventeenth century a checkered and independent existence.

"With the fall of their last ruler, and the capture of

their strongholds, the Falashas were driven from their rocky homes, and forced to seek a refuge in the midst of their enemies, the detested Amharas. The provinces where they at present reside are *Dembea*, *Quara*, *Woggera*, *Tschelga*, and *Godjam*, where their settlements are strikingly distinguished from the Christian villages by the red earthen pot on the apex of their *mesquid*, or place of worship, which towers from the centre of the thatched huts by which it is invariably environed.

"Claiming a lineal descent from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Falashas pride themselves on the fame of their progenitors and the purity of the blood that circulates in their own veins. Intermarriages with those of another tribe or creed are strictly interdicted; nay, even the visit to an unbeliever's house is a sin, and subjects the transgressor to the penance of a thorough lustration and a complete change of dress before he can return to his own house.

"Their stern, uncompromising, sectarian spirit has been highly beneficial in excluding from their community that licentious profligacy in which all the other inhabitants of Ethiopia riot; and it is generally admitted that the Falasha men and women seldom if ever stray from the path of virtue, or transgress the solemn law of the decalogue."

But I am digressing. Let us return to the ghost's narrative.

"From the days," he continued, "of the great Solomon and the beautiful queen, the throne of Abyssinia has been filled alone by their descendants. Of the latest of these was my father; but, alas! so fallen had the fortunes of our branch of the family become; that my parent, being a *lack-land*, and without a single cow, was compelled to

earn a few salts (the coin of the country) by the sale of *Kosso*.”¹

“Faith, it was a great fall for the kith and kin of royalty,” observed Peter. “But, after all, it’s the way with half the people in ould Ireland; and Master Ned himself would be a king, if everybody had his rights.”

“Silence, Peter; do not interrupt,” I said.

“It’s the truth, though, for all that,” he muttered.

“At my father’s death, my brother and I — our mother had long been dead — were left starving. Still, poor as we were, our nearness in blood rendered us objects of hatred to the king, who sought every means to destroy us; for it had been foretold that one of my father’s sons should sit in the royal seat. To protect us, an uncle, at our father’s death, made us take sanctuary in a monastery near *Mattama*. In that holy house we might have remained pursuing our studies for the priesthood till now, had it not been for the bitter enmity to my father’s memory of the *Dejatch Marou*. That wretch once invaded the sanctuary, burned all its huts, and destroyed or mutilated every man, woman, and child upon whom he could lay his hands. My brother and I, however, succeeded in escaping, and in reaching the house of a powerful relation, the *Dejatch Confu*. At this place our manner of life and occupations became entirely changed. The *Dejatch* and our younger relatives, his two sons, were great warriors, and scarcely a day passed without our witnessing or taking part in the exploits of the hunting-grounds or the battle-field.

“The change of vocation, however, was more compatible with my brother’s temperament than mine. In him, indeed, seemed concentrated the warlike, the heroic vir-

¹ A medicine used by the Abyssinians for the cure of tape-worm, a common disease of the country.

- tues of our ancestors. The fires of the hero were within his breast, and he burned to regain the headship that had been lost by some more peaceful chief of our branch of the royal race ; and that, too, less from personal ambition than to restore to our native Abyssinia her ancient place and position among the nations of the earth : for what she had *once* been we had learned from books preserved in the monastery, and the teaching of an aged priest, himself a member of the royal race. Thus, boy though he was, by his brave actions and wise counsels he won the love of our fierce relatives ; but, alas ! his renown reached the jealous ears of the king, who, haunted by the prophecy, sent a powerful army under the Dejatch Marou, our old enemy, into our relative the Dejatch Confu's domains. Confu offered a noble resistance ; but the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The old chief and his two sons were slain, and my brother and I, having succeeded in making our escape, we were once again wanderers on the face of the earth, our sole possessions being the tattered, blood-stained attire we had worn in the last fight, and our arms. The latter I must describe, as they influenced our fate. Mine consisted simply of the *shotel* (a two-edged curved knife), spear, and shield. My brave brother had stood by the Dejatch Confu till the last moment of his life, and received from the dying chief two weapons, of defence and offence, which, even if now alive, he will only part with with his life ; for they have been worn by the greatest and bravest of our race, and have descended from father to son for many, many generations. The first was a shield, plaited and bossed with silver, decorated with the insignia of the elder branch of our race, and a lion's tail and mane ; the other, a long crooked knife *with golden hilt and sheath of silver.*

"With these treasures, my brother and I passed many days and nights in the wild woods, to avoid discovery by any stragglers of our enemy's troops, travelling by night despite the lions and hyenas, who roared and howled around us. One night we had been journeying through a great forest, dense with immense tamarind and sycamore trees. At daybreak we came to an opening, and a scene met our vision that should have gladdennd our hearts. It should have been the region of God's own peace; for beautiful, most bountiful, were the gifts of nature around,—fields, plains, valleys, rich with verdure, streams of crystal, and distant hills bestrewn with cattle, which were browsing, as it seemed, to the music of the birds! But, alas! there were more terrible living things in the trees above, and upon the earth beneath! Upon the branches were savage men; some asleep, but others with flashing eyes and naked weapons gleaming in the sun; while beneath, the earth was strewn with the mutilated remains of dead bodies. And these sights we came upon suddenly as we emerged from the forest.

"The first to speak, I exclaimed in a whisper,—for I had a faint hope that we might yet retreat without being seen,—'We are dead men!—these are the *Beni Nimmer!*' (Children of the Tiger).

"'Thou art right, Joas,' he replied; adding, in a low tone, 'cover thy body with thy shield: they have poisoned arrows and spears.'

"'Then let us commend our souls to Heaven,' I replied; for I knew the merciless nature of the Beni Nimmer.

"'Good, Joas,' he replied; 'but in the meantime let us preserve our bodies, that we may some day exterminate these thieves; for has it not been written that one of our father's sons shall be king?'

"They may not have seen us yet. Let us return to the forest," I replied, still with the same hope of which I have told you.

"Too late! too late! But let us die like sons of our father," he replied, as a shower of arrows rattled against our shields; and as in battle often before, we stood back to back, sword in hand, covering our faces with our shields. In a minute we were surrounded by nearly naked savages, whose hideous cries rent the air; and I groaned with agony at the thought of speedy death by the inglorious and dastardly hands of thieves.

"But, to my astonishment, one voice, more powerful than the rest, cried, 'Who art thou, O stranger! that bearest the shield of the great and heaven-descended Dejatch Confu?'

"This was enough. The manner and tone were both friendly; so my brother, removing the shield from his face, boldly, sternly replied, 'What dog art thou, who dares attack the sons of the elder brother of the great Dejatch Confu?'

"The effect was speedy and good; for the chief, turning to his men, cried, 'Children of the Tiger, behold the renowned Shétou, the lion in battle, the serpent in council; for no other man living would dare brave your chief! Children,' he added, 'Shétou is the worthiest of the blood of Solomon. Shétou will henceforth be your prince, as he will by our aid be emperor of Abyssinia.'

"My brother knew the nature and temper of these people well: to have refused would have been death. He therefore replied:

"If the Children of the Tiger will have it so, Shétou will be their prince, and lead them to conquest; but Shétou is an adorer of the only God, — the God of the Chris-

tians,— and will not become their prince if one drop of blood be shed at his election.'

"'As the great Shétou orders, so let it be,' was the reply; and thus my brother became the **TIGER PRINCE**."

"But," asked the Doctor, "what was the meaning of your brother's promise?"

"My friends, then, have not heard of the cruel customs practised by many of the tribes of Ethiopia at the election of the Prince? It is thus," he replied: "The dignity of chief is generally hereditary in one family; but among the sons of the deceased, the election is made as follows: As soon as the chief dies, the sons run out, like wild beasts, to hide themselves in the bushes and thickets. In a short time all the chief men set forth in chase of their future chief. The flight of a bird of prey is the signal by which they are guided to him. The fidelity of the men is confirmed by the finding him surrounded by lions, panthers, and other wild beasts. He himself counterfeiting the nature of the beasts, resists and attacks those who come to raise him to the sovereignty; taking care, however, to allow himself to be overcome in due time. But the cruelest part has to be told. His election is inaugurated by the killing of two persons of distinction, with whose blood the threshold of his door is besmeared."

"The cannibal Rapparees!" cried Peter.

"A verra bad beginning in life for a young man to mak' himself chief o' sic a band of thieves," said the Doctor; "but it was verra proper of your brother to get that proviso put in his lease."

"By the powers! it must be a bold lad that 'ud be the keeper of such a menagerie; and I'd like to hear how Mr. Shee-too drilled such wolves and tigers."

"Silence, Peter!" I cried, angry at his interruption.

"I ask your pardon, Master Ned, but the royal highness had slipped my memory ; it was the ghost I was talking to."

"Wild beasts may be tamed," replied Joas. "Thus Shétou sought to tame his tigers, — at least he permitted no wanton bloodshed, for he was a Christian ; but he was a man and a prince, and so at every opportunity he let them loose upon the lands of our old enemy, the De-jatch Marou, or other chiefs associated with him. For twelve moons the Beni Nimmer, under their new prince, were incessantly at war, and in every battle were they victorious. But there are envious, jealous men in all tribes ; so, several of the smaller chiefs, disgusted at the discipline in which they were kept, — and more so at not being permitted to plunder, as had been their wont, travellers on the highways, — conspired against Shétou's life. Fortunately, I discovered the plot, — not, however, before it had spread so widely, and taken such root among the people, that it seemed that, even to my brother, nothing less than a miracle could save his life and power. Thus I vowed, if Heaven vouchsafed us victory over the rebels, I would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹ Well, by aid of those of the chiefs and their troops still faithful to my brother, we met the rebels, and, after a bloody battle, destroyed one half their number ; the other half we drove into a village which but a short time before we had depopulated (Heaven forgive us for our crimes) by slaying every man, woman, and child." Here he stopped, and tears of sorrow or repentance coursed down his cheeks.

"For which, mon, ye deserve to be weel hangit like a dog, — and calling yourself a Christian, too !" cried the Doctor, indignantly.

¹ A pilgrimage common among the Abyssinian Christians.

"Faith, Doctor, dear," said Peter, "ye are too hard upon the young man. If we did not do *quite* as bad in India, it was only because we are a *little*, just a *little*, and only a little, more tamed than these people."

"Remember, also, Doctor," I said, this time supporting Peter, "your own countrymen, the Highlanders, have committed as great crimes under the license of war; and, for the matter of that, the English too. Who can forget the massacre of Glencoe, or the doings of Colonel Kirk and Judge Jeffreys?"

"Ay, faith," added Peter, "and Cromwell. Shure war is war, all over the world."

"It's verra true, verra true indeed," replied the Doctor; adding, "and we must na forget the young man's a born barbarian, — 'What's bred in the bone wont come out of the flesh.'"

"After the decisive battle which gave us the victory," continued Joas, "I burned with anxiety to set out upon my journey, — the more so, remembering the horrors of the war. A great difficulty, however, stood in my way. I should have to pass through many tribes hostile to my brother, nay, to our family; moreover, both Shétou and I had been proclaimed traitors by the king at Gondar,¹ and a large reward offered for our capture, alive or dead. This, however, I surmounted by assuming the scant garments of a herdsman, and by making detours through the woods and forests in order to avoid towns or villages; and thus, after a toilsome journey of many weeks, I succeeded in reaching the sea-coast opposite Massawa. On the evening of my arrival at this island, I met with what at the time I believed to be a piece of great good fortune. As I was

¹ Gondar is the capital city of Abyssinia.

walking by the sea-shore, I was accosted by a man in priest's garments attended by a boy.

"‘My son,’ said he, ‘what affairs can have brought thee so far from our native Amhara?’

"‘Father,’ I replied, ‘you have guessed rightly. I am from Amhara, the son of a poor herdsman, on his way to holy Jerusalem to do penance for his sins.’

"‘Surely,’ said he, ‘one so young, and yet so pious, can have committed no very great crime; but be that as it may, — and I seek not thy confidence, — Heaven alone can have directed thy steps to this island at this moment. I and this youth are performing the same pilgrimage, and we await here but the boat which leaves to-morrow at sunrise for Jidda. Is it not good that we have met? — my years may afford thee holy counsel, while thy youth and strength may help to protect this lad and me from robbers.’

"‘My father,’ I said, ‘it is good;’ and greatly I rejoiced at the companionship, the more especially as he desired not to be made acquainted with the past; and so we took shipping in company, and landed at Jidda. A few days after, I learned the folly of too readily placing confidence in strangers. We lodged at the house of a Mahometan merchant, instead of passing through the city quickly; for the priest’s boy was taken ill. Pitying the poor fellow, I offered to attend him; another of the duties I assumed, was to fetch water from the well. Now, it was upon the sixth morning after our reaching this city, that, upon my return from the well with the water, I found the boy dead. Imagine my consternation. I cried aloud that the lad had been murdered — poisoned in my absence. The merchant entered the room, but, to my astonishment and indignation, instead of sympathizing with my grief first ordered *his servants to bind me hand and foot, and then struck me*

upon the mouth with his slipper, declaring that I was a Christian dog, the accomplice of a thief and an assassin, who had abused his hospitality by killing the boy for the sake of his clothes, left the dead body in the house, and, worse than all, who had decamped with some of his most valuable property.

"I remonstrated, but in vain. They carried me at once before the magistrate, who, having listened to the merchant's story, at once adjudged me to be sold as a slave, the purchase money to be given to the *honest* merchant as a compensation for his loss."

"But," interrupted the Doctor, "why did you not tell the whole story of your birth and connections to the magistrate, like an honest lad?"

"Because," replied Joas, "the chief of Jidda being at amity and in alliance with the king at Gondar, he would at once have sent me back to Abyssinia in chains, where my fate would have been sealed; thus I preferred going into slavery, knowing that from that I should at least have *some* chance of escape.

"The man to whom I was sold was a fierce Mussulman. He took me to Mecca, where we continued nearly twelve months; but during that time he did not permit a week to pass without having me severely beaten on the soles of the feet, by which cruel means he hoped to convert me to his false religion. At length, however, we returned to Jidda, when the opportunity of escape, for which I had been so long waiting, seemed to have arrived. The captain of a ship in the harbor affected to pity my misfortune, and told me that if I chose to run from my tyrant, he would hide me on board his ship — conditionally, that I would faithfully serve him as overseer of a cargo of slaves he was about taking to Suez.

"This offer I gladly accepted. But no sooner did we reach Suez than the rogue sold me to a merchant of Grand Cairo. Truly, it seemed as if I were fated to pass my life in slavery. In justice, however, to my new master, I must say he treated me with great kindness; but then, lax in the practices of his own religion, he permitted me to follow my own; and this kindness, or carelessness, led to my freedom.

"It happened that the Christian priest whose services I attended in Cairo was an Abyssinian. Awaiting an opportunity to speak to the holy man alone, I addressed him in Amharic. He questioned me, and, having heard my whole story, the good man aided me to escape once more, by hiding me in his house till the caravan, which he himself was about joining, should quit Cairo for Jerusalem.

"Grateful for my deliverance, I now became but the more anxious to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This I did, by joining a caravan then proceeding to the holy city. Arrived at my destination, I became an inmate of an Abyssinian monastery; and there I should, in all probability, have passed the remainder of my days, had not Heaven thrown across my path a good English priest who had been in Abyssinia as a missionary. For some reason, I know not what, — for no merit of my own, — the good man became attached to me. He would, day by day, sit or walk by my side, pouring into my ear the difference between the spurious Christianity of my native land and that taught by the books which he had with him, and portions of which he translated. Gradually a burning desire entered my heart to learn the truth, and, by becoming a missionary in my own land, impart it to my countrymen. The good man, delighted at my new-born *desire*, determined it should be accomplished. Thus he

took me with him to Malta, and placed me in the English college, where I remained for four years. Now, Aitoes," he concluded, "the mystery is solved ; you know how it is that a barbarian Abyssinian speaks the English language almost as perfectly as yourselves."

"A verra queer story, lad," said the sceptical Doctor, "and if it be true, you have had sore trials ; but you have na told us what happened between the time of your being a gentleman at college in Malta and a kegged spirit on board this ship."

"The good Englishman," he continued, "having left sufficient money for my expenses at the college during the requisite time for me to finish my studies, left Malta for his own land, which, alas ! I afterwards learned, he only reached to die. Bitterly and long I wept my English parent's death ; nay, ungrateful though it may seem, my heart felt relieved of a great weight when the time came for my leaving a place which, to me, seemed haunted by the good man's memory. But there was one great joy in my heart, — my English father's spirit would forever smile beneficently in heaven did I faithfully perform that mission to which he had become a martyr, and for which I had been educated by his intercession and money. Thus, burning again to set my foot on my native land, with the little money I had left I took a passage in a ship for Cairo. And now the remainder of my story is soon told. On the very day of my arrival at the port of Boulac, Mahomed Ali — the master from whom I had fled with the good Abyssinian priest — came on board to purchase some Italian luxuries we had brought from Malta. Mahomed recognized me at once. To my surprise, he expressed no anger, nay, even seemed delighted to see me. But he gave me an invitation I dared not refuse ; for, as his runaway

slave, he could there and then have seized and punished me. Once, however, beneath his roof, his manner changed. He thanked me for having improved my personal appearance and increased the number of my accomplishments, as by so doing I had added some hundreds of piastres to his wealth; for he could now sell me for a large sum to one of the great country gentlemen in the interior; and with this, he caused me to be confined in the strongest room in his house, feeding me with his own hands for fear of treachery on the part of his other slaves.

"O, good Aitoes! the smile must have quitted the face of the good spirit in heaven! — my heart was ready to burst with grief. An Abyssinian prince of the line of Solomon! — a returned pilgrim from the holy city! — the adopted son of an English father! — but greater, greater than all, an ordained priest of the English Church, a missionary to my benighted land! — *a slave, a slave, again a slave!* to a Mahometan sensualist! But dog that I was to grieve — to lose faith! My English father in heaven was still smiling, for he knew that the power of man could not stay my mission. An opportunity came. Mahomed Ali drank fire-water in despite of the law of his false prophet. He became silly; he sent for me to amuse him. I found him overflowing with kindness. He declared he would never part with me, if I would only promise to be faithful to him. He asked me to swear this. I hesitated — Heaven forgive me! I tampered with him — plied him more and more with the spirit he loved. The result was, that he degenerated into a beast, and I once more rose into a free man; for I had no difficulty in escaping from his room into the streets. For weeks I hid among the purlieus near Boulac. At length hearing that *a vessel was to sail for Massawa with an Abyssinian am-*

bassador, my heart rose high ; for I determined to seek him, and beg for a passage in that ship. But hearing his name, I despaired : it was that of the deadliest enemy of my family ; nevertheless, as we had never met face to face, I prowled about the ship till I was engaged to help carry the cargo and luggage on board. The day before she sailed I hid myself in that cask. The rest you know. Now, Aitoes," he concluded, "having heard a story, the truth of which in every particular I vouch for as a Christian, will you deny me your aid in reaching my native land ?"

Need I tell the reader our reply ? No ! I will only add that, for his own safety, it was arranged that as soon as we reached Massawa he should darken his complexion from nut color to black, and so travel as our negro servant.

CHAPTER V.

THE HARBOR OF THE SHEPHERDS.

Two days after our adventure with the ghost we made the harbor of Jidda, the chief port of Mecca, the birth-place of Mahomet. Here we got rid of a great portion of our cargo, and those of our passengers — about one half the number — who were making the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet at Medina. Quitting this city of miserably narrow streets, white houses, and tall minarets, we ran over to Souakim, a small town upon the opposite coast, with salt bags.

It was sufficiently vexing that we should have changed our course for the purpose of delivering these wretched bags. We had, however, a narrow escape from some weeks' delay; for just as we were lifting anchor, a messenger from the chief of the place came alongside in a small boat, and desired to know if we had a medicine-man on board; if so, he was to come ashore and attend the governor. To our surprise, the Rais answered in the negative, and the man rowed ashore.

"Man alive!" cried the Doctor, "for what did ye tell such a lee, and so, maybe, deprive a fellow-creature of medicine and assistance in the hour of need?"

"Is thy servant a dog, that he should throw away the lives of his best paying passengers, even though they be *unbelieving* infidels? Not so — Allah forbid!" replied

the Rais; and then he told us that an Arabian vessel putting into port, some years ago, a passenger learned in physic and surgery had gone ashore to attend a member of the governor's family. Unluckily the patient died under the lancet, whereupon the poor medico was adjudged worthy of death, and in accordance with the sentence was chopped into pieces in the public market-place.

"By the powers! Doctor, dear, you've had a narrow escape from this terrible Turk! It's very little use you'd have been to your patients in such small-doses."

"Verra like a story in the 'Arabian Nights,' and it's just a fool that you have been for your pains, Rais," replied the Doctor; adding, "you've robbed a poor sufferer of a little Christian help in the hour of need, and a doctor of a patient."

"But the Arabian doctor's fate?" I said.

"Verra likely the man deserved it. It is unco' lucky there is na sic law in England; for many would be the executions, and few the doctors left, in a short time," replied the Doctor. Nevertheless, I verily believe he was not at all sorry the Rais had denied him, for from what we could learn from our fellow-passengers of the governor's overbearing, tyrannical temper, he would, in all probability, have detained us at Souakim at least some weeks. As it was, we did not reach Massawa until we had been a full month at sea.

Massawa, or the Harbor of the Shepherds, is a mere rude rock on the Abyssinian shore, and without a vestige of vegetation. It possesses not one single spring. The inhabitants are therefore dependent upon the people of Arkiko, a village on the mainland, for their supply of water, except, indeed, rain water, which they collect in immense cisterns. The island, by the way, which is barely

a mile in length by three quarters in breadth, is divided into three parts, — one for houses, one for cisterns, and the other as a cemetery. Nevertheless, it is important from the great depth of water around, which enables vessels, however large, to ride near the very edge of the land. As for the climate, — at least in May, the month in which we reached there, — it is execrable, the thermometer rising to 120° Fahrenheit in the shade. Its effect upon the health of Europeans may therefore be very easily imagined. As for myself, two or three days after we had landed I found that my legs were half-covered with boils. At first I thought but little about them, for I had often been attacked in a similar manner — at least, as I thought — in England; the Doctor, however, had been in the country before, and knew the disease.

“You maun be careful, lad,” said he; “you have ‘Ye-men sores,’ just one of the most common, as well as most dangerous diseases of this climate.”

“Climate — ugh!” cried Peter, as the perspiration rolled down his cheeks. “Pondicherry is a hot bath, Aden’s a furnace; but this rock ’ud be too hot for the ould gentleman himself, and Master Ned wont be himself again till we get him on to the mainland.”

“Peter is right. We must just get ye to the hot springs at Ailat as soon as possible,” said the Doctor. Nevertheless, so skilful and attentive was his treatment that before the end of the week I was able to get upon my legs again. How fortunate I was in having such a friend at hand the reader may judge, when I tell him that so rapid is the growth of this disease, and so frequently does mortification set in, that the patient is considered lucky indeed who escapes only with the loss of a limb.

During my week’s illness, the Doctor, like an experi-

enced traveller, had been making preparations for our journey into the interior. He had given our European costume into the care of an Egyptian Jew merchant, who had also provided us with attire more fitting for the climate. Thus, upon my first walk outside the wooden building which formed our lodging, I found myself metamorphosed as follows: On my head a white skull-cap, wrapped round by a muslin turban; a pair of tight-fitting cotton inexpressibles, reaching no lower down the leg than knickerbockers; a belt at least twenty yards in length, of cotton cloth, was wound around my waist, in itself forming a kind of defensive armor, inasmuch as it would resist sword or lance; the principal, or outer garment, was a *shama*, or loose cloth of white cotton, which fell over the shoulders in graceful folds, reaching nearly to the ground, but so cut and arranged as to leave the arms at liberty; lastly, — for we dared not follow the customs of the Abyssinians so far as to exhibit bare feet, — my own boots. Thus you have the costume and general appearance of our party, with the exception of Joas, who, to carry out the appearance of a slave, had, by some process known only to himself, dyed the whole of his skin to the hue of a negro, and whose dress — well, perhaps the least said about that the better, since he wore little more than a large belt, which fell about him after the fashion of a Highlander's kilt; — but stay, there *was* another exception, — Peter would not wear the turban, but insisted upon a *tarbush*, or red cloth cap, as he said, “if only to keep up discipline, and to remind him that he was not a gentleman, but a gentleman's gentleman.”

“Now,” said I, as soon as I had donned my African attire, “the sooner we quit this confounded Massawa the better.”

"Verra good," replied the Doctor; "but it is na so easy a matter. We shall first have to get the *Aga's* (governor's) permission to use the ferry, and *that* he will not give till we have given him a good bribe." Then he told me that during my illness he had made several attempts to obtain an interview with the great man; but to enhance its value, and so increase the bribe or present, it had been refused until that very morning, which had been appointed for us to pay our respects.

The great man's palace was but little better than a large wooden shed, divided into many rooms, in one of which we were desired to await his lordship's pleasure. In this room we found, also waiting an interview, our old friend the Rais, but looking so gloomy and low-spirited that I said, "Why, Rais! what misfortune hath happened to you, man? You look as if you had lost a frigate and found a cockboat."

"Allah be praised, master!" he replied, "I have lost naught but time and temper; but that is much for a poor man. Three days have I been awaiting here to catch a single ray from the light of the *Aga's* countenance; but alas that Allah should have plagued men with wives! there hath been a revolt in his lordship's harem: the ladies are jealous that their master hath purchased an Abyssinian, young and beautiful as a *hourî*, and they are angered so that his lordship can attend to naught else until he hath quieted them. But, Allah help the poor creatures! they may not be blamed for a sin they have inherited from our Mother Eve."

"Bah, Rais!" said I. "How could Eve be jealous when she was the only woman in the world?" But the sailor being at that moment summoned to the presence, the *Doctor* replied:

"Perhaps, my friend, you have not heard the legend of the origin of jealousy, as given in the Mahometan version of the Old Testament;" and he related the following:

"When Adam and Eve were in Paradise, they were for some time a most happy couple (it may be supposed for a month or two, like most married couples); Adam was in the habit of going every evening to heaven to pray. The devil, who had studied the female mind, and knew its weak points, thought that the introduction of jealousy might be a good foundation whereon to build much mischief; so he went to Eve, and, after propitiating her by well-timed flattery, he inquired after Adam. Eve replied by informing him whither her husband was gone. At this the devil smiled incredulously, but said nothing; and even when our first mother pressed him to tell her the meaning of his smile, refused to answer for a time, feigning that he would not hurt her feelings, or injure the reputation of his friend. This conduct was only additional evidence of his profound acquaintance with the weaknesses of the female heart; for by so acting he wrought strongly on her curiosity as well as her suspicion, till at last, having worked her up to a state of mind capable of receiving any lies he might choose to tell her, he informed her, with every appearance of sorrow, that Adam was deceiving her, and paying his addresses to another lady.

"At this Eve laughed scornfully, saying.

"How can that be? for I know there is no woman created except myself!"

"The devil again smiled, with an expression of pity. 'Alas, poor thing!' said he; 'if I show you another woman, will that undeceive you?'

"She assented, and he showed her a mirror. Eve was,

of course, completely deceived; though, no doubt, she thought herself *undeceived*."

"It is an absurd legend," I said, when the Doctor had finished.

"Verra true," he replied; "still, it points this moral, 'That the less our experience in this world, the more should we be on our guard against the devil in the shape of mischief-makers.'"

"His lordship the Aga will permit the Franks to kiss his hand," shouted a slave at this moment; and the next we were standing in the presence of a dark, fat, little person, who, with his legs crossed beneath him, and his portly stomach not more than three sizes larger than his round bald head, which seemed to be affixed thereto without the intervention of neck or chest, reminded one of a dark brown cottage loaf in a dirty white wrapper, with a couple of arms protruding from its sides.

Now, whether this mighty personage expected that we should, as the slave had shouted, kiss his hand, or fall upon our knees before him, I know not; but certainly the little fat man seemed mightily indignant when we entered the room merely bowing; in fact, for a minute or so the petty despot was literally beside himself with rage, puffing out his cheeks, knitting his brow, and rolling his fat sides about like a porpoise in a storm. Perceiving, however, that the Doctor (who, by the way, as the chief, was supposed to be the only one worthy to be noticed) looked him, and that, too, very blandly, in the face, and without the slightest symptom of fear in his countenance, he recovered his self-possession.

"Whose dog is this," he cried, "that dares enter our presence with covered feet?"

"A bigger dog than thou, O Aga,—at least in his

Highness the Viceroy's service," replied the Doctor; at the same time presenting the great man with a document signed by the Pasha of Egypt, and which, I afterwards found, commanded the Aga to render McTow Bey and his party all the aid they might require to enter Abyssinia.

The effect of a single glance at the signature of the document was magical upon the Aga; he trembled a little, then rising, placed the paper upon his head, returned it to the Doctor, and, saluting him after the Egyptian fashion, said: "*God is great; peace be between us.*"

"*There is peace between us,*" replied the Doctor. Thereupon he became seated, and motioned me to do likewise. Peace being thus literally declared, the old gentleman mentally came down from his pedestal, threw aside his stilts, and for the nonce became a reasonable being; that is, he ordered in coffee, pipes, and sweetmeats, and desired to be informed of the object of our journey to so wild a country as Abyssinia; but being told by the Doctor that the main object of his mission was to cure the prince of a disease from which he had been long suffering, his excellency expressed his delight, and offered thanks to Allah and the Prophet for sending into the island beneath his rule so great and learned a man as McTow Bey, chief of the Viceroy's medical staff, and profuse were his offers of assistance. Did he require camels, mules, provisions, guide? they and more were at his service if he would but cure his youngest, most beautiful, and, he added — as he had bought her but a few days previously — most costly slave.

"But, excellency," asked the Doctor, "what is the lady's complaint?"

"Allah only knows!" replied his lordship. "She will not eat, she will not drink, she will not speak!"

"In a sentence," said the Doctor, "she will not fall in love with your excellency."

"Allah be praised!" cried the little man, in real or affected surprise; "the learned Bey is great in magic; he has divined the complaint. The slave is contumacious; she will not love her master."

"I fear I know no cure for that complaint," said the Doctor.

The little man looked incredulous. "The learned Bey," he said, "is offended; he will not use his skill; for truly I have heard that the Frank doctors are skilled in love potions."

"Then ye have just heard nonsense, excellency," replied the Doctor. "However, I will see the lady, and do what I can for her; in the meantime you will, perhaps, send a messenger to the *Naybe* (governor) on the mainland, recommending him to send a camel and three mules, with a guide, to the ferry point, at early morning the day after to-morrow."

"The will of the learned Frank shall be accomplished," replied the Aga; and there and then he commanded one of his people to take the ferry, and proceed at once to his good friend and fellow-Mussulman, the *Naybe* of Arkiko, who ruled the country upon the seashore of Abyssinia. Then, arising from his seat, he begged the Doctor to accompany him to the women's apartments.

"Verra weel," replied the Doctor; "but, excellency, I *must* see the lady bodily, and hold converse with her. No sic nonsense will do wi' me as a little bit of a foot or a tiny hand poked through a hole in a curtain."

On the spur of the moment the Aga was about to make an indignant reply to so daring a proposal; for no true *Mussulman* husband would permit, nor no true *Mussul-*

man doctor would demand to see more than the foot or the hand of a female patient. The Aga, however, I suppose, being at a distance from the *Padisha* (Sultan of Turkey), or, as it were, upon the very outworks of even Mahometan civilization, was somewhat lax in his religion; he therefore merely replied:

"God is great, and Mahomet is his Prophet! What is written is written. Am I a dog that I should send a houri to Paradise before her time? The learned Frank shall have his will; let him follow, and according to his deserts so shall he be rewarded."

"It's verra like a quack's practice, — no cure, no pay," replied the Doctor; but lead the way, excellency, and I'll just do my best." Then, turning to me with an air of command assumed for the nonce, and to produce an effect upon the Aga, he added:

"Lieutenant Bevan, you will return to quarters, and there await my coming."

"Ay, ay, Doctor," I replied; and as he proceeded to the inner or women's apartments, I retraced my steps towards the street, through an avenue of bowing and scraping slaves, each of whom, by the frowns or smiles of their lord, had been accustomed to weigh to a hair the amount of contempt or subservience they should mete out to the visitor. To my surprise I found Peter and Joas standing near the gateway.

"Hurrah!" cried the former, "it is Master Ned! It's lucky for the haythen Aga that it is; for I was just going to make bold to demand of the ould fellow your honor's body, making sartain he'd murdered you and the Doctor."

"Nonsense, Peter; how did such a notion get into your stupid head?"

"It was put there, your honor, by our friend Mr. Ghost here, as he will tell you. The murdering ould thief! But just listen, Master Ned —"

"Hush, Peter, hush!" I replied, fearing that even in Massawa there might be people who would understand him. "Wait until we reach the seashore." The house in which we were lodged overhung the water near the ferry.

"My good friend," said Joas, as we neared the house, "I know this Aga of old. He was a slave to the Pasha of Jidda, and received promotion for his roguery and dexterity in plundering travellers. Doubtless one half of the spoil goes to the Pasha; but be that as it may, knowing the man, and also that you, my kind friend, were in great danger from his secret but lawless practices, I determined to watch him closely from the moment of our arrival in the island. To obtain an entrance into his shed of a house and overhear his plans was not difficult; for the man is a beast. He drinks, in defiance of the laws of his false prophet, deeply of the fire spirits of Europe, and when in his 'cups' talks loudly, boastingly. Thus, last night, while drinking with his nephew Ahmed, I heard him say that he had discovered from some passengers by the ship in which we came here that you were two rich Englishmen, in whose baggage was to be found a fortune, and whose ransom would be worth another if he could secretly have you seized. Ahmed heard this with flashing eyes, but more fearful or prudent than his relative, said:

"By the beard of the Prophet, uncle, it is game worth trapping; but slavery will not do for these Englishmen; infidel dogs as they are, the Padisha himself would not dare risk so much; for the arms of their Queen are long, and reach from sea to sea. No," he added, "it would be *better to delay* from day to day their departure: excuses

may easily be found. We will in the meantime treat them as friends; and if they die suddenly, neither they nor their baggage will be asked for.'

"'Is my brother's son leagued against me, that he would offer rash counsel? Would he rob me of the infidels' ransom? No,' cried the inebriated old rogue, 'it shall not be so. To-morrow will we give them audience, and to their very faces beard them, so that their high stomachs may send forth words that will give us an excuse for their seizure.'

"'What is written is written,' replied the nephew, submissively, and then the worthy pair separated."

"And now, Master Ned, do ye wonder that I was standing at the door with the hunting-knife and revolver beneath this petticoat thing, just to ask the old Rapparee a civil question if you had not answered roll-call pretty soon?" said Peter, pointing to his Abyssinian garment.

"You are a faithful fellow, Peter," said I. "But, thank heaven, there is no fear of any such violent proceeding on the part of the Aga;" and I related the story of our interview with his lordship.

"It is good," replied Joas; "yet my friends must be on their guard against the tricks of this Aga."

"Fear not, Joas," I replied; "but *who* have we here?"

The question was called forth by the appearance of two persons who had just landed from a small boat with a single lateen sail. One of them was a robust young man, with copper-colored complexion, some five feet eight inches in height, and attired after the same fashion as myself, except that his raven, well-buttered hair was the only covering to his head. His feet were bare, and he carried both spear and shield. His companion I imagined to be a Nubian; for he was as black as Joas, and like him

dressed — or, rather, *not* dressed ; without, indeed, a mere waistcloth could be called a garment.

“It is an Abyssinian warrior and his slave,” said Joas.

There was, however, a certain something so peculiar in the features, gait, and general bearing of the slave for a Nubian savage that I am afraid he must have thought me staring him out of countenance. A like opinion must have occurred to Peter ; for as we neared the fresh-comers he said : “There is more here, Master Ned, than shows itself outside. It’s my opinion that that nigger, like a certain unmentionable party, is not so black as he is painted, — a deserter perhaps.”

“Nonsense, Peter, lad ; what could bring a deserter here ?”

But in another minute the mystery was solved. The slave had pricked up his ears at our words ; then rushing forward, and taking us each by the hand, he exclaimed in good French, “The Lord be praised ! I again hear European voices, — again see civilized men !”

“Didn’t I tell your honor the fellow was a deserter ?” cried Peter, exultingly.

“Silence, Peter,” I replied ; then to the stranger, “Who are you, sir, speaking an European tongue, and yet so monstrously disfigured ?”

“A poor priest, a missionary of the holy Roman Church, who for many weeks hath been flying from persecution, disguised as a Nubian slave, as my life must have been sacrificed but for this noble warrior, who, more generous than his cruel countrymen, took compassion, and permitted me to accompany him as his slave. But even here in Massawa I shall not be safe should my coming reach the ear of the Aga, who is a friend and ally of the tyrant *Kasai*.”

"It is *not* necessary that the Aga should know of your being here. Your safety may be assured, for a vessel quits Massawa to-morrow for Cairo," said I.

"But where can I hide in the meantime, and by what means procure a passage?"

"Beneath the roof of yon house, father," said I, pointing to our hut, "you will find a lodging. Your passage my servant here will negotiate with the Rais of the ship."

"But this warrior," I added, glancing at the Abyssinian; "can you trust him?"

"Yes, with my life; for he is a Tigrean, and one of my late flock."

"What brings him to Massawa?"

"I will tell you when we reach the hut," he replied; "in the meantime, with your permission, I will ask him to share with me your hospitality."

The father then, in Amharic, spoke to the warrior, and they followed Peter to the hut, I purposely remaining behind with Joas, who, for reasons known to the reader, did not venture to speak to his fellow-countryman in their native tongue.

"It is strange," mused Joas, when the others were out of ear-shot, "very strange, this persecution of the priests of Rome. At the time I fled my country they were in high favor, and were making converts in all directions. Who is this Kasai, who must be a ruling and a conquering prince to have opened up a persecution of men who for so many years have been protected by Ubie, the most powerful Dejatch of Tigré?"

Well might Joas thus muse, for he knew not then that Ubie had been conquered by this Kasai; nor did he know that, in fact, our disguised runaway had even promised Ubie the aid and presence of foreign troops, conditionally

that the latter prince would make him Roman Catholic patriarch of the whole of Ethiopia.

It was this same treacherous policy that caused the expulsion of the priests of Rome from China and Japan; nay, and some centuries since, even from Abyssinia, as witness the old writer Ludolf:

"Some Portuguese missionaries," he writes, "after the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, almost made Roman Catholics of the Ethiopians, and prevailed upon the monarch to acknowledge the Pope's supremacy, and to admit a patriarch from Rome; the government also consented to abolish their own rites, and set up those of the Church of Rome; but many of their great men, and most part of the people opposing this, took up arms against the Emperor, which gave rise to civil wars of above a hundred years' continuance, wherein multitudes were killed. During this, many provinces revolted from the Emperor, notwithstanding which the monarchs persisted obstinately in their profession of the Romish religion. At last the Jesuits, upon pretence of maintaining the Papal supremacy, undertook the management of temporal affairs in an arbitrary manner, and almost exclusive of the Emperor. They even ventured to go so far as to erect forts, which they manned, and were going to send for European troops; but now the Emperor and the nobility awaked from their lethargy, and immediately agreed to abolish the Romish religion, and to massacre the priests, who accordingly fell the victims of the people; the patriarch himself very narrowly escaping out of the country with his life. Three Capuchins attempting afterwards to get into Ethiopia, the Turkish Basha, at the Emperor's request, beheaded them, and sent him their heads and their skins stuffed."

It must be interesting to the reader to hear what the

good Anglo-German missionary, Dr. Kraff, says about the Roman Catholic missionaries. Writing of their expulsion in '54-55, he says: "When Jakobis (a Romanist) and his companions came sixteen years ago to Abyssinia, Isenberg, Blumhardt, and I were obliged to leave the country, while we are now permitted to return to it, and the Romanists must depart. The Romish missionaries have had a long period allowed for action, and for the promulgation of their doctrines; but no such period was vouchsafed to us to work in. The Romanists made converts in Halai, Dixan, Kaich, Kur, and in other places on the frontiers of Tigré, as many priests in the interior played into their hands. Then, too, to swell the number, they rebaptized their Abyssinian converts, and ordained priests a second time; they committed our Bibles to the flames, or locked them up in chests, so that nobody should read them. They did everything in their power to procure the removal of the present *Coptic Abuna*, or primate, who is unfavorably disposed towards the Romish faith; they strove earnestly to encourage an exaggerated Mariolatry, and to make the veneration of the Virgin the chief object of their activity in Abyssinia. Ubie, the ruler of Tigré, patronized the Romanists in every way, and they gave him, from time to time, valuable presents to insure his protection against the Abyssinian opposition. Indeed, Father Jakobis is said even to have promised him the presence and aid of foreign troops if Ubie would make him patriarch of the whole of Ethiopia. But all these successes and plans were rendered nugatory on the day when Kasai conquered Ubie."

CHAPTER VI.

WE ESCAPE THE AGA'S TREACHERY, AND REACH THE ABYSSINIAN SHORE IN SAFETY.

ENTERING the hut, followed by Joas, who, in his capacity of slave, remained standing at the threshold, I found the Abyssinian and the priest seated upon the floor, while Peter was busily engaged preparing coffee. He had, I suppose, been endeavoring to hold converse with them; for, with a comical expression of disgust upon his countenance, he said:

"Master Ned, Master Ned, your coming is a real mercy; for what will I do with the poor creatures? Shure, they are civil enough, but the deuce a word of the Queen's English can they make out; and as for the like of their lingos, I had every inch as lief be a born savage as a Mounseer!"

"Never mind, Peter: eating and drinking is the same in all languages; so get us refreshment as soon as possible."

By the time, however, the coffee, fruit, and bread were ready, McTow made his appearance.

"Hoot, toot, mon! whom have we here?" he exclaimed, as he saw our two visitors; and being answered, he replied:

"It is not o'er prudent to be too hasty in picking up acquaintances in these countries. Nevertheless, you have *behaved like a Christian, lad*, to the poor creature; for he

must feel verra queer in sic a costume, and more like a heathen savage than a minister. But, lad, you'll be asking how I got on with the Aga's slave girl; for that is just what she is, neither more nor less. Weel, then," he continued, "the old fellow took me to see one of the prettiest girls on the outside of Christendom."

"What was the matter with her, Doctor?" I asked.

"Just nothing more than would be the matter with any free-born woman commencing her sentence of slavery for life, and that I saw in a few minutes; but I made a long face, and shook my head, as I told the Aga, who would not leave us by ourselves, that his slave was suffering from a very dangerous complaint, but that I would cure her if he would quit us for half an hour. To my astonishment, the Aga complied. Half a glance had shown me that the girl was an Abyssinian; thus, as soon as we were alone, I addressed her in Amharic. At the sounds of her native tongue, the girl was so delighted that I feared she would go into hysterics. Having, however, cautioned her against showing her joy, for fear of the old tyrant's sudden return, I asked her to tell me, as briefly as possible, and in tones as if she were describing her symptoms, for I had no doubt the old fellow was listening, who and what she was, and how she had been brought to that pass. She replied, as nearly as I can recollect, in the following words:

"My father, who was a Tigré chief, was killed in battle when I was an infant; thus I was indebted for my sustenance to the charity of a herdsman and his wife. These people were very poor, and, as I grew older, the wife, a woman of violent temper, began to hate me; partly because she considered that the food I ate was taken from her children, but chiefly because of her husband's growing fondness for me; and so often and so terribly did

she quarrel with the poor man, that at length he permitted her to hire me out as servant to a Mahometan merchant, who was in the habit of travelling to and fro from Gondar to the seacoast. In consenting, however, the good man made it a condition that he should see me once every journey. Three journeys the Mahometan kept his promise; but the fourth he brought me to the island of Massawa, and sold me to the Aga, who has determined to make me his wife. But, good and learned stranger,' and as she now spoke, her eyes flashed with hatred and scorn, 'Esther, the daughter of Aito Hablo, is a Christian, and will die a hundred deaths rather than submit! O, good man, make it known among my people in Abyssinia, that I, a Christian, am a slave to this tyrant Aga; and if it but reaches the ears of the great Kasai, he will tear me from him were the wretch to carry me to the farthest end of the world!'

"'Hush!' I whispered, as I heard footsteps; 'the Aga is coming; continue your pretended illness to the utmost length; but assume also a kinder manner to the old man, and I will do your bidding.'

"Then, as the Aga came in, I told him the girl was seriously ill, and that if he did not leave her to herself for a month, or perhaps two, she would assuredly die. 'But, excellency,' I added, 'obey me in this, and by the end of the time I have mentioned she may become the light of your harem.'

"'By the beard of Maliomet, this is good news,' he cried; 'but the potion, the medicine that is to cure her,' added the foolish old fellow, who believed in no cure without drugs. In that, however, he was no more foolish than some civilized Europeans.

"'The potion, excellency,' I added, 'is a dread secret, *which I must compound in my own hut.*'

"'It is well,' he replied; 'and abundant shall be thy reward, O Frank, on the day this girl enters my harem as my wife.'

"'I ask no other reward than assistance to pursue my journey into Abyssinia,' I replied; whereupon the old fellow left me in dudgeon, but with a promise to grant my request to-morrow."

"As shure as my name is Peter, Doctor, dear, he does not mean us to leave the island; it's a cunning old fox; but we will, an' it please the pigs, catch him in his own trap;" and then Peter repeated Joas's story of the plot between the Aga and his nephew.

"I'm na surprised," replied the Doctor; "he is rogue enough for anything. But, my friend Peter, we will circumvent him yet."

Now, during the Doctor's recital, the Abyssinian and the priest had listened intently, attracted, I suppose, by the earnestness of his manner, for neither understood English; but at its conclusion the priest said, in French:

"Esther! — Aito Hablo! What means Monsieur by these words? It is to seek a girl of the name of Esther, the daughter of the Aito Hablo" (at this moment we were startled by a heavy sigh from Joas, who was standing with his arms folded across his breast, and leaning against the wall) "that this Abyssinian warrior is now in Mas-sawa by the command of Kasai!"

"Verra queer coincidence," said the Doctor, who then repeated the substance of the story he had just before told.

"Remarkable indeed!" replied the priest. "Whén," he continued, "weeks, months had passed without bringing Esther to his home, the herdsman entertained but little hope that his adopted daughter had been sold into slavery to a Kaffir. Determined to discover the truth, he

travelled on foot to the coast, questioning by the way each traveller, and so at last ascertained that she had been carried to Massawa. This was enough for his purpose; he had now but to carry the information to Kasai. Thus he sought a relation — this warrior by my side — who, holding a command in the army, had influence with the king. The brave soldier, indignant at the villainy, threw himself at Kasai's feet, and told the story of Esther's abduction.

"Enraged at so great an outrage, Kasai commanded all the chief Mahometans to appear before him.

"'Dogs of Mahometans,' he cried, 'restore this girl to her friends!'

"'How,' they replied, 'O King, can we be made answerable for the knavery of one of our people?'

"'Restore this girl to her friends, I say!' repeated Kasai.

"'How is it possible, O great King? It is long since the girl disappeared. She was sold upon the coast; nay, has probably been resold in Arabia.'

"'Dogs!' returned the king, sternly, 'talk not to me of possibilities or impossibilities: the girl must, *shall* be restored to her friends. To me *one* Christian subject is of more value than a thousand Mahometans. In one month from this day she must be found — ay, even if she be at the bottom of the sea. Now, ye dogs, make it known among your people that two of the chief men among you shall die on the first day of each month until the girl be found — ay, even if it is to the extinction of your abominable race!'

"A verra smart commanding officer that Kasai!" observed the Doctor. Unheeding this the priest continued:

"Now, Kasai has never been known to break his promise for good or for bad, to his friends or his enemies.

Messieurs can therefore comprehend the consternation in which the Mussulman population are placed. Within a week from this day the first month expires, and two lives will assuredly be sacrificed to what Kasai considers the offended laws."

"Verra shocking!" moralized the Doctor. "Ye'll now just see the benefits of civilization; for if this captain, king, or whatever rank he may hold, had just the railway and the telegraph wires through his dominions, for about thretty shillings, or it may be less, we could save the lives of these poor creatures; and at sic a juncture I wouldna mind being one half the siller."

"If pigs had wings they would fly,' as we used to say at school, Doctor. But let us be practical: can we, or can we not rescue this girl from the hands of the Aga?" I said.

"Monsieur is right," replied the priest. "The girl must be rescued, and so perhaps the men's lives may be saved."

"But how, by what means, man? The old tyrant will not part with her but with his life," said the Doctor.

"Monsieur," replied the priest, "does not know the power and influence of this King Kasai; he is the ally of the Viceroy of Egypt. The Aga dares not risk his enmity, even if he chose wantonly to sacrifice the lives of so many of his fellow-religionists. My friend here," he concluded, pointing to the Abyssinian, "will obtain possession of the girl within an hour of the time he demands her of the Aga."

"Then, in Heaven's name," said I, "let him at once seek the Aga."

"Na, na; not so fast, my friend. Let us wait till to-morrow, when we can all row in the same boat; for if the old rogue finds he is compelled to give up the girl, he will just detain us by way of compensation."

"Then what do you purpose?" said I.

"Weel, just to visit the girl with the promised potion, when I can tell her she has friends awaiting at the ferry, if she can only manage to get out of the house. I shall then see the Aga, and give him such a good account of her health, that in joy he will give me the letter for the Naybe on the other side for the mules and camels, as well as the loan of the ferry-boat."

"But suppose the girl is stopped in her endeavor to leave the house?" I asked.

"Weel, then we shall be on the safe side, and she none the worse; for we can leave the island before he can rescind his permission, and this warrior here," pointing to the Abyssinian, "can make his formal demand."

"Monsieur is right; his plan cannot fail," said the priest. "But will he send his servant to procure me a passage in the Cairo vessel?"

"Your pardon, father," replied the Doctor; "in our selfishness we had forgotten you;" and Peter went there and then to negotiate his passage with our old friend the Rais.

In the interim, the priest and the Doctor, who understood and conversed in the Amharic tongue, made the Abyssinian acquainted with our plans, in which he acquiesced with dignified pleasure. He certainly did express much regret that if our plan succeeded he would have no opportunity of coming to words, if not blows, with the rogue of an Aga; he could not, however, object, since we had been the means of discovering the girl for him.

The following morning, the Doctor, taking with him the *magic* potion, — that is, a bottle of colored water, — visited the "Palace," and, after an absence of three or four hours, *returned, rubbing his hands gleefully.*

"The old fox," he said, "has taken the bait, and, please the fates, will be caught in his own trap. Since my first visit, he says, he hears the girl has been more cheerful. I informed him that she was recovering more quickly than I had expected; but still, if he really desired to restore her to perfect health, he must permit her to take exercise in the grounds. In his delight, the old fellow at once gave the necessary order to the eunuchs and the she-dragon who guards his harem. Then, taking a copious draught of strong waters, he bade me demand my own reward. I repeated only those I had at first made, — a letter to the Naybe of the Mahometan portion of the coast, and that the great ferry-boat might be placed at my disposal."

"Truly," replied the old fellow, 'the Frank doctor is but laughing in his sleeve at us, to demand so little for so great a service!' Nevertheless, the avaricious tyrant, chuckling to himself at the thought of so good a bargain, sent for his nephew, the amiable gentleman, you know, who suggested poisoning us, and having made him write the requisite order to the master of the ferry, and the letter to the Naybe, affixed his signature and official seal." So concluding, the Doctor threw the two precious documents upon a stool in the centre of the room which served for our table.

So far, luck was on our side; still, it was possible that even after we had taken the girl safely on board, we might be followed in other boats. It was therefore arranged that Joas should take the boat which had brought the priest and the warrior, and taking the letter for the Naybe, procure the camel and mules, so that they might be at the very water's edge, ready for us, upon reaching the other side — an arrangement at which he was the more pleased, as it would keep him aloof from the warrior.

At sundown we bade "bon voyage" to the priest, who was going on board the Cairo vessel later in the evening, and proceeded to the boat with bag and baggage. When on board we met with a difficulty for which we were not prepared; at least we had not thought about it. The man in charge of the boat was a servant of the Aga, and desired, in obedience to orders from his master, to start at once. As this, however, would not suit our plans, I bribed him to wait, telling him that we had left our black slave Omar (Joas) in the town, transacting important matters, and that we must await his coming.

"Verra foolish," said the Doctor, of course in English; "for when the girl comes, and he sees we have deceived him, he will not budge; nay, perhaps give the alarm that we are running away with a woman."

"We cannot help ourselves otherwise, Doctor. But never fear; as soon as the girl comes in sight, Peter and I will secure his arms, and so hold him while you and the Abyssinian work the boat across."

"Verra good," replied the Doctor, coolly.

The boatman, being bribed, waited *one* hour willingly, *two* hours impatiently, but at the *third*, or rather at the commencement of the fourth, he swore by the beard of the Prophet that since we had detained him so long, he would not go at all that night, nor would he permit us.

"Mark time there, comrade!" cried Peter, slipping a noose over his head, and bringing it tight round his arms, just as he was about quitting the boat.

"Cleverly done, Peter;" and placing the barrel of my revolver against the boatman's face, I said, in Arabic, "One word above a whisper, and you shall sup with your ancestors, my friend!" and from that minute not a word was spoken by either of us as we sat awaiting the girl.

Two hours more ; still no signs of her approach.

"She will not come. The old fellow has arrested her in the attempt to escape."

"Na, na," said the Doctor ; "she's too cunning to be caught, and is biding her ain time, that she may come the safer."

A few minutes more it was daybreak, and in the distance I saw the slim figure of a woman, enveloped as closely as the females of Egypt, and as it approached nearer the water's edge, heard the pattering of her tiny feet, and hard breathing, panting from exhaustion.

"By Jove, Doctor, you are right! Peter, help her into the boat. I will keep this fellow in check," I cried.

A minute more and the Abyssinian and Peter were toiling at the oars, while the Doctor, as he held the tiller, was listening to the silvery tones of the Amharic beauty, as, panting like a hunted hare, she lay in the bottom of the boat at his feet.

"I have fled, but they are following," she cried ; "but save me! save me! *Silla Jzgyheyr, Silla Medhainy Allam!*" (For the sake of God! for the sake of the Saviour!)

"*Avoonat, Avoonat!*" (True, true!) cried the Abyssinian warrior, as, when about fifty yards from the shore, we saw twenty or thirty dusky forms hastening towards the sea. The advantage, however, was all on our side; for there was no boat within a mile of that point of the shore to which they were running.

"Them must be smarter chaps than I take 'em for, Master Ned, if they catch us before we reach the other side," said Peter.

"Verra true," replied the Doctor ; "and they must be a deal smarter still if they can tak' the lassie when they do catch us," said the Doctor.

The girl, however, whose terror at being retaken was in proportion to her joy at her escape, gesticulated to the rowers to quicken their speed, piteously crying, "*Silla Mariam! Silla Abouna Tekla Haimanout!*" (For the sake of Mary! for the sake of St. Tekla Haimanout!)

No such exhortation, however, was needed; for with such might and main did the rowers pull, that I verily believe the Aga's people could scarcely have taken to their boat when we stood on the Abyssinian shore. Our slave Omar, *alias* Joas, was there awaiting us with a camel, but only one mule, for no more could be procured for the next two or three days, as the Naybe himself was absent on a journey. Having disembarked and removed our baggage to the back of the camel, we gave the boatman his liberty, a few extra coins, and a message to the Aga and his people, embodying Kasai's threat touching the execution of two Mahometans a month until the stolen girl should be delivered into the hands of her friends; for this, we thought, and as it proved, rightly, would have the effect of stopping further pursuit.

As soon as we had dismissed the ferryman, the Abyssinian warrior, in a formal, distant manner, embraced and congratulated Esther upon her rescue, and told her that he was commanded to take her before Kasai; moreover, that they must set off for the interior, without delay, to save the lives of the two miserable Mahometans; to which she answered with dignity, but with very little warmth. As for the Doctor, the girl would have fallen at his feet and worshipped him, had he permitted; but taking her by the hand, he bade her hasten forward to the village, and seek rest and refreshment after her fatigue; then he helped her to mount the mule. As she did so, she, I almost thought a little coquettishly, removed the covering

from her head and face, and for the first time my eyes lighted upon an Amharic or Abyssinian beauty. The Doctor had seen her before, therefore felt neither surprised nor delighted; but a thrill of admiration passed through my frame. The cold-blooded warrior blinked his eyes a little, as if under the influence of some power even more dazzling than his own burning sun. Peter, as he afterwards told me, "found himself staring, with both his eyes wide opened with astonishment, that a nigger, or at least a copper-colored girl, should possess the charms of a European."

The effect of Esther's unveiling, however, was most remarkable upon Joas, who stood by my side quivering, nay, trembling, in every limb. As the girl's eyes caught those of the young Abyssinian, she started strangely; and, for a minute, seemed to scan his features closely; but then, with a heavy sigh, she urged the mule forward; and walking by the animal's side, we proceeded in the direction of the village.

It has been said that the young Abyssinian females are among the most beautiful in the world. But the reader shall judge for himself by Esther. Of middle height, if judged by the English standard; a form like that of the Medician Venus; complexion, olive brown, yet paler than the palest Egyptian; luxuriant glossy hair, of raven black, which fell in graceful *negligé* over a swan-like neck, to her feet; high, broad forehead, aquiline nose, teeth of pearly whiteness, and the eyes of Juno,—a thought too large, perhaps, but dark, brilliant, and tempered by a soft, dreamy expression, that penetrated to the very soul.

Arriving at the village, or rather town, of Arkiko, a distance, as nearly as I could judge, of about two miles from the sea, we were very cordially welcomed by Mohammed,

the son and representative of the Naybe. The Abyssinian was desirous of pushing forward into the interior at once ; but there were two difficulties in the way. First, the Doctor insisted that Esther should have at least one night's rest before advancing another mile ; next, Mohammed dared not part with a single mule in the absence of the Naybe.

In the interim, however, Mohammed placed at the disposal of our party a small house, consisting of two large rooms, and offered Esther a lodging in his own dwelling with his two daughters, girls about her own age. The hospitable Mahometan, moreover, sent us a plentiful supply of coffee, fruits, and that, in such a climate, most medicinal of luxuries, tobacco. Thus, with the exception of one little incident, our first night in Abyssinia was spent in unruffled pleasure. But the incident. Well, then, I have mentioned the effect of the beauty of Esther upon Joas, — his tremor ; her starting at first sight of him ; in a sentence, the mutual effect of the meeting upon both. The Abyssinian had also noticed this, and a dark cloud gathered upon his brow. Truly, the warrior had kept silent, but during the journey from the sea-shore to the village, his great, dark, penetrating eyes had more than once been fixed upon Joas. Again, during the evening, had his eyes ever and anon been fixed, as I fancied, with something like glances of hatred upon the sham slave. Now, these thoughts troubled me ; for I feared that the young prince's disguise had been penetrated, and that, too, by an enemy whom I, at least, knew he desired to shun. So deeply did this fear take root in my brain, that I was scarcely surprised when awakened very early in the morning by a tug at my ear. I heard Peter whispering, "Master Ned, the

Abyssinian means mischief to our ghost;" and looking around, I saw that the warrior was absent from the floor where I had left him fast asleep the night previously.

"Hush!" I said, "don't awaken the Doctor;" and I arose and followed Peter out of the house.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ATTEMPT AT MURDER — A NARROW ESCAPE.

"THAT apology for a soldier," said Peter, "means mischief to our friend the ghost. But listen, Master Ned, and I'll draw up a report in the twinkling of an eye. You see, about an hour after we had rolled ourselves up in our big shawls, and laid upon the mat, I heard what I believed to be the sharp, shrill note of a bird. However, I took no notice of it till I heard a movement; then, opening one eye, only one, I saw the door of your room open, and, to my astonishment, a little chit of a nigger girl come in (the two rooms opened one into the other) and tickle our friend's ear. In an instant the ghost—I suppose like me he'd been in a kind of cat's sleep—sat upright, and spoke to her very softly in some heathenish language, which she answered. A few words more passed between them, when she beat a retreat, and he laid down again to sleep. 'Oh, oh,' thinks I, 'you've made the best of your time with a vengeance, Master Ghost; only one day here and making sly appointments, or hatching plots, or some such bedevilments already.' But, by the powers, Master Ned, it bothered me a good deal; for although I called over the roll of my memory, I couldn't make out from whom that little nigger had come, till suddenly, in the crack of a rifle, it came across me that it could be from no other than that *Miss Esther* we have had such trouble about; and not a bad



A NARROW ESCAPE.

idea either ; for, d'ye see, as Mr. Joas, when out of paint, is a kind of gintleman in his own country, it's just likely they might have had some acquaintance before ; though, for some reason best known to themselves, they didn't like to recognize each other publicly. ' Well,' thinks I, ' he'll be getting up by times.' So I slept a cat's sleep, with one eye open ; and faith, shure enough, about half an hour ago, the ghost got up and stalked away. Now you know, your honor, I am no ould washer-woman to go prying into other people's affairs, and so should have taken no notice ; but a few minutes after Mr. Ghost had left, that soldier fellow followed, as softly as puss. Then, putting this and that together, says I to myself, ' Peter, there is foul play going on. That chit of a nigger girl has been making appointments and spoiling 'em. The hussy is in both camps.' ”

“ Likely enough, likely enough, Peter,” I said, impatiently ; “ but which road did they take ? ”

“ Towards yonder garden, or jungle, or whatever they may call it here,” he replied, pointing to a vast space at the back of Mohammed's house, covered with copse and underwood.

“ He means mischief, sure enough, Peter. Let us follow up his trail.”

And softly we approached the brushwood. Listening, we could hear the footsteps both of Joas and the Abyssinian. Suddenly the sounds ceased : the two had evidently come to a dead halt. As noiselessly as possible, we passed through the aperture by which the warrior had entered, until, indeed, we were nearly at his heels. His left knee was upon the ground, his right hand clutched the spear, and his head was stretched forward as if watching a grassy open space in Mohammed's garden, into which the aper-

ture or avenue led, and so intently too that he had not heard our approach.

In this position he remained for about ten minutes, when there came upon our ears the silvery tones of Esther's voice, and then in reply the voice of Joas; although what they said was undistinguishable to me. Not so, however, to the Abyssinian; for the lovers, if lovers they were, spoke in Amharic. The subject of their discourse could not have been pleasing to him; for, trembling with anger, the spear shook as if it had been an aspen leaf. Then, no longer able to hold his rage within bounds, he arose, and screaming the war-cry of his tribe, "*Isyyoh!*" (O God!) he darted forth.

Then came a wild shriek!

"The villain will commit murder!" I said, as Peter and I rushed forward.

"Bedad he *has*," replied Peter, springing like a mastiff upon the warrior and bringing him to the ground.

He had at least attempted to spear Joas; but with the quickness of lightning the noble girl had become her lover's shield. The weapon had passed through the fleshy part of her arm, and now, bleeding and fainting, she was being supported by Joas, the expression upon whose features was fearful to behold, — agony for the wounded girl, hatred, vengeance upon the enemy who lay writhing under the powerful grasp of Peter.

"Dog!" he exclaimed, "thou shalt die;" then to me, "Heaven will reward thee, my friend, for this timely aid. But the good Doctor, the good Doctor."

"Peter, hasten, fetch him. I will take charge of that fellow," said I; and relieving him of his prisoner, Peter ran back to our hut.

In the meantime the household were aroused, and our

host, with half a dozen slaves, stood in the garden, not a little astounded at the tableau; his European guest kneeling, with his hand at the throat of his Abyssinian guest; but, worst of all for a Mahometan, the beautiful Esther wounded, and in the arms of a black slave; for such he considered Joas.

"*Allah il Allah!*" he exclaimed. "Remove the girl to the women's apartments, and strangle that dog of a slave!" Then to me he added, sternly, "Take thine hands, O Frank! from the throat of the noble warrior, who, doubtlessly, has but wounded the girl in his attempt to do justice upon this dog of a slave, who would have stolen away his most precious jewel."

This was Mohammed's view of the matter. Like a true Mussulman, he abhorred black slaves, and believed instant death only too good for them when they contaminated, by a single touch, a female of their master's family; and he believed Joas to be the slave of the Abyssinian. When, however, I told him exactly how matters stood, and that Joas was a noble Abyssinian, although, for safety from his enemies, disguised, and more, the McTow Bey's great friend, the tables became turned, and with great *sang froid* he said:

"God is great! we have discovered the real criminal; it is the Abyssinian dog. Let *him* be strangled." But now the lady — whose wound, by the way, had been tightly bound by Joas — interfered.

"Noble Mohammed," she said, "not a hair of that warrior's head must be injured. He is the envoy of the conqueror Kasai; and if he be slain, the lives of a hundred Mahometans will not suffice to appease the King's anger."

When Joas had translated this, for she had spoken in Amharic, Mohammed stroked his beard, and, muttering a

prayer of thanks that he had not thus inadvertently brought upon his head the vengeance of Kasai, rescinded his last order. But, notwithstanding his wholesome terror at the conqueror's name, he determined to save Joas from another attempt upon his life, and so gave the warrior into custody of his chief officer, commanding that functionary not to lose sight of him until he had seen him across the Abyssinian frontier.

"But this lassie, this lassie!" cried the Doctor, who had made his appearance shortly after our host; "she maunna be moved for this three days."

"Truly it matters but little. This man of Habesh¹ will tell his master the girl is no longer a slave; that she remains here as our guest, and to preserve her life; and lastly, that he may have her whenever he chooses to send; for, by the beard of the Prophet, *we* have had enough of her." Then growling a malediction upon the heads of all his guests for having created such a storm, at the same time that they had deprived him of the Mahometan chief's luxury, the meting out of punishment to at least *some* one, he returned to his apartments.

"Hoot, toot, mon," cried the Doctor, as we were returning to our hut; "how got ye up such a hurricane?"

"A storm in a teacup, Doctor, dear; but Mr. Joas here will tell you all about it," said Peter; but all that Joas could tell us was, that Esther had been betrothed to him when a child, and the recognition had been mutual. As for the Abyssinian's attack, he could only surmise that he had fallen in love with Esther himself, and that jealousy had incited him.

"Surely," I said, "the man recognized you."

¹ *Habesh* is the native name for Abyssinia.

"Impossible, my friend ; or, if so, as an Abyssinian only. Had he detected in me the 'Tiger Prince ;' for, like my brother, so was I called, he would have denounced me to the Naybe, and earned reward instead of threatened death ; for by the Mahometans, even more than Christians, are the children of the Tiger feared and detested."

Later in the day the mystery was cleared up. The chief wife of Mohammed, jealous of the beauty of Esther, and fearing its influence over her husband, placed a slave girl near her in the twofold capacity of servant and spy. When the girl repeated to her mistress the message she had received from Esther for Joas, the malicious woman told her to deliver it faithfully, but at the same time to apprise the warrior of its purport ; for she calculated that if ill blood arose between the two, Mohammed, in his great disgust at Esther's making an assignation with a black slave, — for such she believed Joas to be, — would at once send her across the frontier.

The day following this fracas we had arranged to visit the springs. When the morning came, however, the Doctor, finding his patient's arm had become inflamed, and symptoms of erysipelas had set in, good-naturedly resolved to remain with the poor girl ; so that Peter, Joas, and I started without him. We were tolerably well armed ; that is, we each carried a rifle and pig-knife, I having my revolver in addition. Unfortunately, we had but one mule between us. However, the animal was large and strong ; so in consideration of my bad legs, — to cure which, indeed, was the object of the journey, — it was arranged I should ride him, Joas and Peter getting up behind in turn. Joas had first turn, and so we set out.

For the first few hours our way lay through a flat, sandy country, dotted here and there with large patches

of stunted shrubs. Wild beasts, and perhaps wilder men, we expected and were prepared to encounter. I certainly, however, did not anticipate finding so large a populace above *terra firma*. The air seemed alive with insects of every variety, both in species and hue. Most annoying of these, even more so than mosquitoes, were the cockroaches. Their din was bewildering: buz, buzzing on all sides, they madly bobbed in our eyes, up our nostrils, and taking advantage of the narrowest gape, rushed down one's throat. Against this nuisance I must set the pleasure of watching the aerial gambols of the sun-birds, pretty little creatures of a dark brown, with throats of glowing scarlet, and green heads.

Half suffocated with dust and cockroaches, we were not a little delighted when we reached a limpid stream, at which we refreshed ourselves both outwardly and inwardly. Here, however, one of our party was well-nigh meeting with a serious mishap. Peter, who had been bathing, was sitting at the water's edge, when a dusky-colored, mottled snake, of about eighteen inches in length, but very thick for its length, and with two horns about an eighth of an inch long, came wriggling towards him.

"Shure, it's a queer little specimen you are," said he, putting forth his hand to take it up; but Joas darted forward and dashed the reptile to a considerable distance.

"Bad manners to ye, Mr. Joas; you have done the small creature a mischief, poor thing!" cried Peter.

"And perhaps saved your life, my friend; it is one of the most venomous snakes in Ethiopia," replied Joas.

He was right. It was a *cerastes*, or horned viper; a reptile whose bite is so dangerous, that if the remedy be not *at hand*, or applied in time, it proves fatal; for a couple of days afterwards hemorrhage takes place, and the blood

flows from the eyes, nose, mouth, and every pore of the skin, till the sufferer expires from exhaustion.

"Ugh, the varmint! it's a large quantity of mischief to be packed in such a small parcel, and beats the big serpents of Bengal into fits!" cried Peter, horrified at his narrow escape. "A pretty country, faith," he added, as he looked at Joas's naked feet, "to walk in without shoes! But I suppose we shall get used to it in time."

There was sound philosophy in this last remark; for although for months we felt in continued dread of the venomous reptiles with which the country abounds, habit at length became so nearly second nature, that before we quitted Ethiopia we looked at them with but little more fear than we do rats in England.

Leaving the stream upon our right, and turning to the left of the road, we entered a valley so densely wooded as to deserve the name of a forest. The change was delicious. The burning sun, the orange colored sand, the bright rich green of the scant foliage, even the deep blue cloudless sky, had become suddenly toned down.

"At all events, after having our brains broiled and our feet grilled as if we had been walking upon hot iron, this wood's a treat," said Peter. "But, by the powers, it's a pity we haven't a fowling-piece among us!" he added, as coveys of partridges rose before us, and hundreds of star-tled guinea-fowl flew screaming over our heads.

"Don't grumble, Peter; we shall want our rifles for larger game than this before we return," said I; and, as if to verify my words, a minute afterwards a splendid antelope darted across our path, followed by a yelling, howling hyena.

"Faith, Master Ned, but you're right," cried Peter. "A

fowling-piece would be of but small use against such an ugly creature as that."

"And still less, my friend, against the lions, elephants, baboons, and wild boars which abound in these regions," said Joas.

"Shure, it's poking fun at us ye are, Mr. Joas. You don't mean to say we shall fall in with them great beasts," said Peter, with a look of alarm, and fingering the lock of his rifle.

"As I have said, these animals abound in these regions," replied Joas; but fear not, they seldom or ever attack man unprovoked."

"You don't mean that," replied Peter, sceptically. "I wouldn't believe it at all at all, if you were not a born neighbor of the beasts, and so more likely to know their behavior."

At the time I was no less sceptical than Peter; but since then my own experience and the testimony of others have convinced me of the truth of Joas's assertion. For instance, the great traveller and sportsman, Mr. Mansfield Parkyns, writes: "These animals, unprovoked, never attack man; nor do I believe in the general opinion that certain other wild beasts will do so. I have never yet seen such a case myself, and have had many conversations with good authorities on the subject, all of whom appeared to agree with me. Among others, I had at Cairo the pleasure of forming the acquaintance of Colonel Outram, an officer equally distinguished in India for his skill as a sportsman, as for his courage in the field and judgment in diplomacy. On inquiring of him, he agreed with me in every point, and told me that even the so-much-to-be-dreaded '*man-eating tigers*' never attack a man to his face, but usually *spring at him from an ambush*. The only animal spoken of

by the natives of this country as having the daring to do so, is the rhinoceros. But as I have never had an intimate acquaintance with him, I cannot pretend to pronounce as to his character.

"A single male elephant will attack anything; but this can no more be taken into consideration than the acts of a dog when under the influence of hydrophobia; for the elephant, thus separated from the herd, appears to be nearly in a state of madness, wantonly destroying every object he can lay his trunk upon. If wounded, or otherwise provoked or frightened, the wild boar, like all other animals, turns, in self-defence, upon his aggressor; and a most formidable brute he is too, when he takes it into his head to charge. More than once I have been the object of such an attack; but on looking round with a view to escape, it has generally happened, very luckily for me, that the nature of the ground rendered it more prudent for me to stand where I was and defend myself. On one occasion, a wounded boar came at me in a low bush whence I had shot him; so I dodged to the other side as he passed, and he went straight on, apparently rather pleased than otherwise to avoid the rencontre. Another time I had killed the male, and the female which was with him (I pretend not to say by what feelings instigated, not knowing whether she was his wife or sister), charged most valiantly to the rescue. I prepared to defend myself as well as I could with the butt of my rifle, which I clubbed with both hands; but the brute appeared unwilling to spoil so good a tool; for, coming within three yards of me, she dashed her snout into the sand, thereby dusting me well all over, and went to the right-about as fast as she came. I pursued her from sheer spite for the start she had given me, and coming up, shot her, as I had previously done her companion.

"If you take to your heels there is little chance; they soon come up with you, and send a few inches of their tusks into a part where few men would think proper to show the scar. They are, moreover, the toughest animals I ever met with, except, perhaps, the large dog-faced baboon. An old sow once amazed me by her fortitude. I had aimed at her heart, as being the most susceptible part of the *beau sexe*; but, either from my hand being unsteady or the rifle overcharged, I hit her backbone, which I imagine must have been nearly severed, for she fell, the blood pouring over her sides and back from the wound. On my going up to her she rose and crawled off on her fore-legs, dragging her hinders after her. Anxious to put her out of pain, I made at her with my bowie-knife; but she was ungrateful enough to refuse my well-intentioned advances, each time I approached letting drive at me with her sharp tusks, one of which grazed my leg so as to draw blood, besides making a mark on the butt of my rifle, which I had put forward to guard off the blow. With a spear I could have finished her at once; but economical considerations with regard to my powder induced me to refrain from giving her another shot, so certain was I that she must drop in a moment; but she did not, for she got away among the bushes, and it being nearly night, I lost her. Next day, attracted to the spot by the vultures congregated there, we found these birds pecking at the few bones which the hyenas had left."

CHAPTER VIII.

ADVENTURES AT THE HOT SPRINGS.

"BEDAD, Master Ned, the very sight of that Adam's ale almost quenches me thirst," cried Peter, as we came in sight of a spring, whose bubbling waters sparkled like jets of crystal.

"Then we will halt and refresh ourselves, Peter; for you look dead beaten by your long tramp in the hot sand;" and Joas and I, dismounting, tied the mule to a tree.

"Faith, your honor, an old soldier ought to be ashamed of himself for getting as tired on the march as a recruit after his first drill; but the truth is, it's me poor feet, They feel as heavy and as hot as a couple of flatirons just taken from the fire."

"Never mind; cheer up, lad! A horn of punch, a foot-bath, and an hour's rest will furbish you up again," said I.

"And just bring me poor feet to their senses. But, by the powers, your honor," he exclaimed, as he placed his hand in the wallet in which he carried our refreshment, "Dr. McToby has put flour in the wallet instead of made bread!"

At this I was as much surprised as Peter; but Joas explained to us that the Doctor, who had catered, had performed his duty wisely; for made bread would in a very short time have been dried to a chip. Like an old traveller in those wilds, he had intended that we should

make our own bread, as occasion required. Joas then proceeded to make a loaf, after the following fashion :

Having first made a fire in a cavity in the ground, he mixed a certain quantity of flour and water, kneaded with his hands, until he had produced a loaf about the size of a ten-pound cannon-ball. Then taking a good-sized pebble, he heated it and thrust it into about the middle of a loaf; carefully closing the hole, he put the loaf on the embers, and having turned it about for a quarter of an hour, we found ourselves in possession of bread, not very well baked, to be sure, but still eatable.

"Shure, Mr. Joas, if ye hadn't been a prince, you would have made a baker," said Peter, as he tasted it.

Of this bread and some punch—at least we gave it that name, for want of a better—compounded of honey, water, and a small proportion of brandy, a flask of which I carried, we made a very good meal. Just as we had finished, we were not a little surprised at the strange behavior of our mule: suddenly it had begun snorting, bellowing, kicking its heels, and lashing its tail furiously.

"Shure, the beast's gone stark staring mad!" exclaimed Peter.

"No," said Joas; "there you see the cause of the poor animal's conduct;" and he pointed to its back, whereon was perched a little grayish-brown bird, with a blood-red beak, which it was industriously pecking into the mule."

"The bird has begun to devour the horse," said Joas.

"The impudent little blackguard, to think he can eat a whole mule," cried Peter, striking at the feathered offender with a stick he had picked up for the purpose. But it was no easy matter to remove him; marvellous was its tenacity; for several times Peter knocked him off, but only for *him to fly to another part*, and begin to peck, peck, as un-

concernedly as if nothing had happened. It was only, indeed, when worn out by repeated blows that he fell to the ground to rise no more; but even when dying he managed to make several holes in his antagonist's legs. At the final peck, which brought forth a small fount of blood, Peter, writhing with the pain, lifted his arm savagely to give the *coup de grace*; but arresting it half way, and laughing, he cried, "Faith, it's a big hero I am, to be fighting a pitched battle with a bit of a cock-sparrow! but," he added, picking up the now dead bird, "it's a brave little fellow you've been, although a bit of a cannibal; and so I'll just stuff ye, and take you home as a specimen of what a little 'un can do when he's put to it." The name of this plucky little member of the feathered tribe I could not learn. Joas told us, however, that they are the terror of all caravan travellers, who regard them with horror as being blood-sucking vampires.

After this adventure I again mounted the mule, Peter this time getting upon the crupper, and we pushed forward in the direction of Ailat. Having passed through the wooded valley, we entered upon a large open space intervening between the wood we had quitted and another at the other side of the plain. Here we fell in with a Shoho, or Bedouin encampment.

These people were traders, on the way to Massawa with goods. They treated us kindly, offering us food, and even lodging for the night; and, finding we could not accept their invitation, bade us beware of the lions, which they declared to be in the plantation before us. This caution was necessary; for about two hours afterwards, as we were turning a corner formed by a clump of trees and bushes in the road, the mule trembled in every limb; and not without a cause; for about twenty yards to the front, a

huge lion was seated upon its haunches, quietly staring us in the face.

"Bad manners to the beast; he wants all the road to himself!" said Peter, significantly handling his rifle.

"Do not fire; for if you *wound* and not *kill*, we are dead men. Let us retrace our steps; there is another path to the right," cried Joas. It was good advice, and the mule seemed to understand it by instinct; for, recovering from its first terror, it turned tail, and ran at a pace which under other circumstances would have been marvellous. As Joas had predicted, the lion, not being provoked, did not attack us; nevertheless, I believe, like me, he himself thought we had had a lucky escape. As for Peter, his opinion was expressed in the following sentence:

"Bedad, Master Ned, but it was lucky we fell in with the gentleman after he had dined, as before he might not have been in such a good temper."

It was not till about an hour before sundown that we reached Ailat. The village is composed of some fifty or sixty huts, built of wood, the trunks of trees, and straw. The *Fakak* (that is, chief or head man of the village) being informed of our arrival, sent us an invitation to take up our lodging at his house. We gratefully accepted the offer, and were placed in the guest's room, in company with half a dozen people, who before the following day verified to the full the adage that "travellers see strange bed-fellows;" for bed-fellows they were, inasmuch as all within that room slept upon the same large mat. Our companions consisted of a Galla chief and five attendants. The great man had come to Ailat to try the hot springs; his complaint being — may I mention it; but I must, or the reader will underrate our powers of endurance that night; *well* — *that* infection for the amelioration of which in

Scotland a Duke of Argyle earned immortality by erecting posts. However, feeling that beggars could not be choosers, we made the best of it, and, throwing ourselves upon the mat, slept till — till we were awakened by the strangest noise I think I ever heard — a mixture of shrieking, moaning, groaning, and singing.

"It's the hyenas," cried Peter.

"Nonsense," said I; "it is the voice of a woman;" and going outside the hut, we saw a female sitting upon a small box, bobbing her head backwards, forwards, sideways, round; when we went out she was muttering a prayer, then she howled (singing it was called) for a minute or two, then she put her head in motion, then stopped to smoke a pipe she held in her hand.

"The lady's a trifle mad," said Peter.

"No," said Joas, "the poor creature is endeavoring to expel the bad spirits she believes have taken possession of her."

"Shure, then, she had better turn teetotaller," said Peter.

At that moment she held her head still, and a man came forward and placed in her hand a red hen; this she kissed and put upon her neck. If the efficacy of the spell, however, depended upon the bird remaining any length of time, she must have sadly grieved; for the instant her hand left it the hen flew away. After this the poor creature went away with her friends, and Joas explained to us the meaning of this superstitious ceremony.

The Gallas, and all of the people of Gurague and Shoa, who are smokers, believe that there are eighty-eight spirits which they call *Sarotsh* — in the singular, *Sar*. These spirits are said to walk about and afflict men with sickness, and hence, when such persons feel sick, they take their refuge in superstitious means; by smoking and sing-

ing, moving their body, and particularly by offering a hen to the Sar, they imagine that they can frighten away the bad spirit and secure themselves against being sick.

The Sarotsh are divided into two parties, each having its *Alaca* or head: one *Alaca* is called *Mama*, who has forty-four Sarotsh under his command; the name of the other *Alaca* is *Warrer*, and has the same number of Sarotsh under him; each Sar has a particular name. When persons perform such a ceremony they speak in another language: thus, for instance, they call a hen "*ishari*;" in the Amharic, a hen is called *doro*. The hen is afterwards slaughtered and eaten by the assistants, except the brains, which are only eaten by the person who has performed the most part.

But to return to my narrative. That day we remained in the village to rest; the following morning we joined a party on their way to the African Cheltenham. The baths of Ailat, however, have already been so graphically described that I prefer to picture them in the words of one who knows them well: "The site is picturesque, but the baths are rather too open to public view, and the bathers are not over delicate in their ideas. Both sexes bathe almost in the same place; the men lying on their backs, and the women sitting in a hole about ten yards below them. Most of the women and all the men were quite naked; so it may be imagined this style of bathing could not altogether suit the ideas of the frequenters of Bath or Cheltenham, though in these latitudes such little naturalities are not objected to. While the rest of the party were thus engaged, not being anxious to join them, I walked up the valley, and had a good deal of sport among the fowl and other game that were sneaking down to the water to *drink*. In this way I amused myself for nearly two hours-

and when I returned I found, as I expected, that not only were all the people gone, but that the water had had time to repose; so I bathed comfortably. It was, however, so hot, that, notwithstanding the great heat of the atmosphere and the warmth of my own body from walking, I found it difficult at first to bear my foot in it. I tasted the water, and as far as I could guess, should think it contains both sulphur and iron. It is reckoned here a general specific for all complaints, but more especially for cutaneous diseases—many cases of which are in constant attendance. People come from the most distant parts of Abyssinia, from the islands about the Red Sea, even from Jidda and other towns on the Arabian coast, to try the efficacy; and generally, from what I hear, return well satisfied."

The extraordinary powers attributed by native patients to these waters doubtlessly exist chiefly in their own imagination; but, be that as it may, I can vouch for the efficacy in my case; for by the free use of them for a week I had recovered my marching legs. There is, however, one fact I must mention in connection with these baths, one, too, which might be regarded as a drawback to the frequenters of Brighton, Cheltenham, Bath, etc.: that among the distinguished visitors may not unfrequently be found the lion and hyena. There are several of these medicinal baths in the interior of Abyssinia, and the properties possessed by all are ascribed to the influence of some saint. The history of the baths at Gumarat, for instance, is thus told:

"Holy Kirkus, a man of great saintly repute, by his love of truth and zeal for the gospel, contracted the enmity of the unbelievers, who, to glut their revenge, awarded him a crown of martyrdom. The soul of the saint, released from its earthly thralls, winged its flight to the re-

gions of the blest; but his mortal remains, uninterred by the miscreants, were devoured by large vultures, and his bones dropped near the Gumarat, on those very spots from which gush forth the healing waters — the incontestable proofs of his piety, and the everlasting memorials of his benevolence."

The day before I had resolved to return to Arkikō, the Fakak, a fine old Bedouin Arab, and, in his way, as hospitable a fellow as could be found in this realm of England, pressed upon us the loan of a couple of strong-legged, steady-going mules.

"By the powers, but he's a fine ould boy that; it's a pity he was born out of Ireland!" cried the foot-sore Peter, when I told him of the chief's generosity; "and we'll just sleep to-night the sounder for the thought of it."

Peter, however, proved but a false prophet; for long ere the break of day I was awakened by a hideous noise. It was the howling of beasts of prey: what, I knew not, for I had heard nothing resembling it. Instinctively I clutched the revolver by my side. The click of the lock assured Joas, who it appeared had been awake some few minutes, that I was aroused.

"Aito," he said, softly, "there is a pack of hyenas outside the hut."

"Hush!" I replied; "what is that?" and although it was so dark that he could not see my hand, I pointed my pistol at two great globes, apparently of blue fire, fixed upon the door. "By Jove! one of the beasts is in the hut! Arise! to your rifle!" and the next instant a bullet was planted between the glowing orbs; a low deep growl, and they had vanished.

"Aito, you have acted unwisely," said Joas, coolly; "*the beast could not have entered: do you not remem-*

ber the hole in the door? it had merely thrust its head through; we may now be attacked by the whole flock."

"Then, bedad, we'll give them a warm welcome," cried Peter, jumping up and seizing his rifle. Joas did the same; and thus prepared we opened the door and marched out into the bright moonlight, and the cause of the uproar was apparent. The hyenas had been supping upon the body of a fine antelope, when their party was joined suddenly by a majestic lion, who, having slain several of the couriers, was, just as we made our appearance, making off with the remains of the antelope, followed by the howling, laughing pack. So, leaving the beasts to settle the dispute among themselves, we returned to our mats, finished our sleep, and early the following morning set out on our return to Arkiko. Such scenes as the one we have witnessed, I was afterwards informed, are of no uncommon occurrence in those wilds; but a few words with my reader will not be out of place here, about "that," in showmen's language, "cruel and untamable beast, that never was yet tamed by man."

"Give a dog a bad name, and hang him," says the old adage. Upon this principle, mankind, from the earliest period, appear to have treated the hyena, perhaps because it is of the dog kind. The ancients believed the poor beast to be a kind of demon, with a neck formed of only one bone, which after death was of peculiar efficacy in magical invocations. They also believed it could change its sex, and be at will either male or female; moreover, that it imitated the human voice, and possessed the power of charming the shepherds, so as to rivet them to the spot upon which they were met by the animal. In this, however, the hyena was not more maligned than the wolf, of which animal it was believed that it had only to first fix

its eye upon a man to render him incapable of speaking and permanently dumb; both stories evidently derived from men's fear. That the hyena is not a very amiable or cleanly animal we cannot doubt, and have additional evidence in the amusing and interesting description of it given by the traveller Parkyns. "In Abyssinia," says this gentleman, "there are several varieties of the canine species. First, as being the largest, is the misshapen, disgusting 'laughing hyena:' called in Tigré, *Zibby*; in Amharic *Jib*. He is to be found almost everywhere in the country, but, from his scavenger habits, chiefly in the most thickly peopled districts; he prowls about the streets of the villages, howling, laughing, and quarrelling with the dogs, with whom he disputes the possession of the offal, and even enters the yards and houses in quest of anything eatable, nor is he (if hungry) very choice in his selection of a supper; he will steal leathern bags and pieces of skins, such as are used for wearing or sleeping on.

"I have frequently been disturbed by them in this manner; and it once occurred to me, as it has often to people whom I have known, to be awakened by one of them endeavoring to steal my leathern bed from under me. Luckily they are as cowardly as they are big, strong, and ugly; for had they only the pluck of a toy terrier, there would be no living in a country so full of them; nevertheless, they are said to attack children and weakly persons. They are supposed to detect a faint and wearied wayfarer by the smell of his footsteps, and so follow him till, overcome by fatigue, he shall fall an easy prey, or till sleep shall give them an opportunity. They have even been known to attack persons asleep in their own houses.

"A living evidence of this is to be seen in the person of a young Mahometan now residing at Adoua, who was

robbed one night of the scalp of one side of his head. The Abyssinians relate that in such cases (which are comparatively rare) the hyena shows quite as much prudence as valor; for they positively assert that before attacking a healthy sleeper he will scratch him with his paw. If the man sleep heavily (as is often the case in this country, to an almost wonderful degree), the beast will make one grab with his powerful jaws at his face or head, and be off; whereas, if disturbed by the scratching, the sleeper should start up, he will turn tail at once, leaving behind most disagreeable evidences of a highly nervous temperament. He is dangerous among domestic animals, and frequently attacks donkeys or mules. Once I was sleeping on the White Nile; we were a large party, and, for fear of lions, etc., had tethered our animals in an open space, while we ourselves slept in a circle all round them with fires lighted. In the middle of the night we were disturbed by a great 'kickup,' and on rubbing our eyes, made the discovery that a hyena had had the impudence to come into the midst of us, seize my favorite donkey by the rump, and drag him almost out of the circle of the camp. It would appear that he had bitten harder than he meant; for he had torn out a piece of flesh as big as a man's fist.

"Once, however, in Abyssinia, a case of 'catching a Tartar,' or 'the biter bit,' occurred between a hyena and a donkey; for the latter with his teeth seized his aggressor by the neck, and, aided by terror, held him fast till he died. Next morning, when his master came, he found him shivering with fear, but still holding on to the hyena's corpse; nor could his mouth be opened till they got a bar, and forced his jaws asunder. I was told this story by the son of the donkey's master. He positively assured me of the truth of the story, and, moreover, declared that from

that time forth, the donkey, which had formerly been much given to roaming, was perfectly cured of his erratic habits, nor could he be induced to pass the night even outside of the house."

As for the showman's calumny, it is simply a calumny, and nothing less; as witness the testimony of Baronne, the African traveller, who says, "The hyena has lately been *domesticated* in the Snewberg, where it is now considered one of the best hunters after game, and as faithful and diligent as any of the common sort of domestic dogs."

Bishop Heber tells us he knew a gentleman in India who had a hyena for several years, which followed him about like a dog, and fawned on those with whom he was acquainted. Again, Cuvier mentions a hyena that had been taken young at the Cape, and was tamed without difficulty. His keeper had a complete command over his affections. He one day escaped from his cage, and quietly walked into a cottage, when he was retaken without offering any resistance. And yet the rage of the animal was occasionally very great when strangers approached it. The truth is, that the hyena is impatient of confinement, and feels a constant irritation at the constraint which in the den or menagerie is put upon his natural habits; a fact fairly illustrated by the following anecdote:

A hyena at old Exeter 'Change was so tame as to be allowed to walk about the exhibition room. It was afterwards sold to a person who permitted it to go out with him into the fields, led by a string. After these indulgences, it passed into the hands of a travelling showman, who kept it constantly in a cage. From that time the poor beast's ferocity became so alarming it would allow no stranger to approach it, and it gradually pined away *and died*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOCTOR IS KIDNAPPED.

WE had taken leave of the good-natured chief, mounted our mules, and were on our return to Arkiko ; but just as we had quitted the town Joas reined in his mule, and stared very intently at one particular tree. Not a little surprised, Peter and I also brought our animals to a dead halt.

"Why, what ails you, my friend?" I asked.

"Is it an evil spirit of the woods that you take the tree for? Shure, Mr. Joas, it's a close measure you are taking!" said Peter.

"Aito," he replied, pointing to an overhanging branch, upon which was sitting a black and white bird, "see! *Gaddy, gaddy!*"

"Your daddy, daddy, is it? By the powers, then, I am not astonished at your fright!" said Peter, with a look of terror; for he had mistaken the sound of the first letter of the bird's name; moreover, like most soldiers, my servant was superstitious.

"If it flies away at our approach it is a bad omen. We must return," Joas added, by way of explanation; but even as he spoke the bird opened his wings and soared heavenwards.

"Aito," he again said, "we must not make the journey now, or misfortune will befall us before the day closes."

"Nonsense, Joas, nonsense!" I exclaimed, really vexed

at what I considered to be such utter folly. "Come, come; onward! I cannot, will not any longer delay our return to Arkiko."

"Shure, Master Ned, dear, it's not yourself that'll interfere with any man's belief!"

"Tut tut, Peter, — forward!" and as I urged the mule onwards, Joas followed, saying, submissively:

"Aito, you command here; it is not for one who has received such benefits to disobey."

Some curious stories are told of the implicit faith which Abyssinians place in omens. "Hunters on the march," says one traveller, "follow the warning of a small bird as to the direction they should take; and I have known parties turn back from pursuing the fresh trail of a herd of buffaloes, and take an opposite direction, merely because its chirp was heard on the wrong side."

"Once a party of about thirty robbers having been reported to be in a certain neighborhood, a large force collected to meet them; but after arriving in sight of the enemy, the gallant army returned peacefully home; and considered such a course not only justifiable, but right, because, when halting to reconnoitre, the omen had been heard on the side favorable to their adversaries. On another occasion I had started on a hunting and foraging expedition with fifteen tried and picked men. We had remained a fortnight in the woods, and had seen nothing of the robbers. One day, however, a bird gave us an omen of success, and the night following we discovered their fires on a hill scarce a mile distant from where we lay. Our party was in a moment on the *qui vive*; primings were looked to, edges of knives felt and rubbed on a stone, and each one anticipated the glory he was to gain for himself in *butchering* a few of the enemy. Some even were

so excited that they began to strut about and count their deeds of valor in expectancy of what they would have to do on their return home. But a night bird's voice settled the whole business; and, instead of waiting, as had been our intention, for a few hours before sunrise to strike the *coup*, we all sneaked off homewards, like so many whipped dogs; for the vainglory of the warriors had oozed out at their fingers' ends at this intimation of the beaked augur that their bones would be safest in the bosoms of their family circles."

It is unfortunate that mere coincidences so frequently come to the support of believers in the supernatural. They do, however; and so it happened in our case. As towards sundown we slowly rode up to our hut or house in Arkiko, guess our astonishment at seeing a mere ruin,—that is, only the roof and a portion of the walls; the remainder had evidently been destroyed by fire.

"Aito, the omen was right!" said Joas, seriously.

"Tut tut, absurd!" I cried; "the mischief here must have been done days ago, while we only had the omen, as you call it, this morning."

"Faith, you are right, Mr. Joas," observed Peter. "You see, Master Ned, if the spirits that sent that omen hadn't known you'd be so unbelieving, they wouldn't have sent it, and this wouldn't have happened."

"You have got a whole herd of Irish bulls together in a single sentence, Peter," I replied, laughing at the queer entanglement of his ideas and words. "But," I added, seriously, "what can this mean? Has the Doctor set fire to the house by accident? We will at once to Mohammed; for doubtless there we shall find him."

"Aito," said Joas, as we entered the ruin, and he well scanned the place, "this is the result of no accident; it is

the work of the fierce Gallas. Our friend, the good Doctor, has been carried off!"

"Then it's mighty civil thieves they are," cried Peter, coming from the back room, into which he had run upon dismounting; "for they have left all our baggage behind."

"Is it indeed so?" I exclaimed, with delight; and, going into the room and finding our baggage as we had left it, my alarm for the Doctor's safety at once subsided.

"You are right, Peter. Galla thieves would not have left such, to them, valuable baggage behind. The Doctor is safe. Let us at once seek him at Mohammed's."

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"In the name of Heaven, what?" I said, startled by his despondent tones.

"The Gallas have been instigated by the warrior to carry off Esther."

"Impossible! we left her under the protection of the Naybe's son."

"Pray Heaven I *may* prove a false prophet, — we shall see," and at that moment I stood before Mohammed's gates, clamoring for admittance to his presence. Speedily a slave made his appearance, who told us that the Naybe, having returned six days since, had sent his son upon some mission to Massawa.

"Then," said I, "tell the Naybe I desire an interview with him immediately."

"Impossible! His lordship the Naybe is asleep. It *would be death to awaken him.*"

"But the Frank doctor, man,—the friend and high servant of the Viceroy of Egypt,—is he in this house?" I urged.

"For whose dog do you take me," replied the slave, "that I, a good Mussulman, should watch the coming or going of an infidel Frank?" and the surly brute was about to shut the gates in our faces; but, thrusting one foot forward and shaking his fist in the black's face, Peter cried in a rage:

"Maybe, me dear child, I wouldn't like to get ye alone for a few minutes; six dozen with the gun sling 'ud be nothing to the treat ye'd get!"

"Come come, Peter," said I; "it is of little use quarrelling with this fellow; it is to the Naybe we must look for news of the Doctor."

"Faith, your honor, if it's like master like man, it's little you'll get out of the May-bee, as you call him (and it's too good a name for such an insect), if you don't well squeeze him."

So great were my fears for the Doctor's safety, and that treachery was intended towards us, that I slept but little that night. Early the next morning I again presented myself at the palace gates, and to my surprise was readily admitted, and courteously received by the Naybe. To my question as to the destruction of our hut and the disappearance of the Doctor, he replied, with tears in his eyes (crocodile tears, by the way), that a messenger from his son Mohammed having told him that the renowned and learned physician, McTow Bey, had arrived at Arkiko, he had hastened home to do him honor, and to obtain his medical advice; but, alas! on the very night of his arrival a band of fierce Gallas, headed by the Abyssinian warrior, whom his son had so unwisely dismissed his dominions, had

the work of the fierce Gallas. Our friend, the good Doctor, has been carried off!"

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entered the town, and having first forcibly seized the girl Esther, had then set fire to our hut, and carried away the Doctor with them. "God is great! What is written is written!" concluded the old hypocrite. "But alas that the son of my father should have lived to have his beard plucked and dirt thrown upon his head by such dogs and sons of dogs!"

It was with impatience I listened to this long story; but being finished, I said, as I played with the butt of my revolver:

"Naybe, this may or may not be true; if it be, you will at once provide me and my servants with mules and camels, in order that I may at once set out in search of my friend."

"*Bismilla!*" he cried, lifting his hands in affected astonishment at my recklessness. "Is the Frank possessed, that he would venture among tribes who would assuredly hack him to pieces? Would he risk his valuable life for the mere shadow of a chance of meeting his friend the Bey?"

"Naybe," I replied, turning the muzzle of the revolver towards him, but as if inadvertently, "if you have played us false, it is you who are risking your life."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, jumping up in a tremor, "would the dog of a Frank murder me?"

"Do not for your life call out," I said, now really holding the weapon towards him. Pointing to a Koran lying near him, I added, "Will you swear by your prophet and on that book — first, that what you have told me is true; secondly, that you will give orders that all I may require shall be provided for me within the next three hours?"

"*Sheitan afrit!*" (devil, or tormenting spirit), he said.

"Nay, swear!" I said, interrupting him, "or, on the word of an English officer, I will instantly blow your brains out."

"Dog! you dare not; my servants would hack you to pieces."

"Perhaps so," I replied, assuming as much coolness as possible; "but I shall have avenged my friend. In the meantime, my servant has orders, in the event of my not returning to the hut within an hour, or at the first alarm, to seek the British Consul at Montcullen" (a town a few miles from Arkiko). But further threats were not needed. The old man, taking up the Koran, took an oath—an oath no Mussulman would be likely to break—that his story was true, and to furnish me with supplies.

Thus from the Naybe's fear of death did I wring the truth, or at least, as we shall see hereafter, a portion of the truth. As for my own safety I had no fear, for I knew that he held the British Consul—who by a messenger to the Viceroy of Egypt could ruin him and his—in too much awe to attempt at least open violence against my person.

"I have heard," he said, as I was about leaving, "that British officers are brave, generous. I find they are brigands and cowards; for who but a coward and a brigand would thus have threatened to murder an unarmed old man!"

"Naybe," I replied, "I can forgive harsh words; more, I regret now that I have treated you so harshly; but all men say the Naybes of Arkiko have ever been liars of the first water; and the life, or at least liberty, of a brother officer is at stake!"

"*Sheitan afrit!*" he now exclaimed, in impotent rage, "get thee with all speed from Arkiko, or, in spite of my

own oath and the Viceroy himself, I will have thee hewn to pieces and thrown to the dogs!"

"My friend, let peace be between us. This rage is childish, unnecessary; no ears have heard, no eyes save mine have witnessed the offence to your dignity;" and, bowing, I left the great man mentally many degrees lower in his own estimation.

"The beautiful Esther, Aito?"

"The Doctor, Master Ned; has your honor heard of him?"

Such were the questions put to me as I entered our hut. I replied by repeating all that had passed between the Naybe and myself.

"It is as I said; my beautiful betrothed, my bride, is in the power of my enemy. But I will have vengeance!" cried Joas, with fierce gestures and flashing eyes. So far the wild, warlike Abyssinian had spoken; but remembrance of the holy mission he had undertaken, his good teacher, his Christian education, rushing through his brain, the original savage and the cultivated Christian feelings came in conflict. The latter obtained the victory, and tears rolled down his cheeks as he muttered, "'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;' who am I that I should seek to punish a fellow sinner?"

"My good friend," I said, taking his hand, "give not way to this despondency. On the raging sea, the mountain top, the savage wilds, the hand of God is as omnipotent to protect as in the crowded city. The beautiful Esther may yet be in safety; at least, it is a consolation to think that the good Doctor is with her, and that although with the warrior you call your enemy, she is still the ward of the conqueror Kasai. Nay, we may even soon rescue her; for to-morrow at daybreak we will start for Gondar,

and there at the foot of the king's throne you may demand her."

"You are kind, very kind, Aito," he replied, pressing my hand; "but I fear this Naybe will never permit us to leave Arkiko, if by any secret means he can prevent it. "Stay," he added, thoughtfully; during your absence with the Naybe, I heard from one of the water-carriers that Mohammed, his son, had unexpectedly returned. He is a good man; I will seek him, and perhaps we may yet be able to frustrate the intended treachery; for that treachery is intended I have no doubt. The Naybe cannot, will not forget or pardon the insult you have given him."

"Then be it so," I replied; for I felt the full force of all he had said; and Joas went on his mission to Mohammed. He was not absent more than an hour. On his return I asked, "Has the Naybe told me the truth?"

"He has, but not the *whole* truth. The Gallas, headed by the warrior, entered the town, burned this house, and carried away both Esther and the good Doctor; but the Naybe connived at it — nay, received payment for permitting it. Moreover, although the mules and camel will be forthcoming to-morrow, and so the Naybe will have kept his oath, a band of men will start before us, and wait in ambush within two hours' journey of the town, and at the first opportunity fall upon us. But Mohammed is a good man; to frustrate his father's wicked scheme he will send a camel and mules, two hours before daybreak, and with them a guide."

"If this Mohammed be not as treacherous as his rascally father, then we are safe; for to be forewarned is indeed, in this instance, to be forearmed. But did Mohammed tell you the road taken by the Gallas and their prisoners?" I asked.

"He did, Aito. To Halai, into the Tzanna desert, through Adoua and Axum to Gondar; but further than the mountain Halai we shall require no guide. At the foot he can leave us. I will perform the duty the rest of the journey, upon which heaven guard us from wild beasts and wilder men!"

CHAPTER X.

WE SET OUT IN SEARCH OF THE DOCTOR.

"THERE is at least *one* honest man, then, in the old sneak's family," cried Peter, as, at the appointed hour, the guide entered the hut, and told us the camel and mules were waiting outside.

"We wont halloo, Peter, till we are out of the wood ; there may be even more subtle treachery in store for us — who knows ? — at least I am uncharitable enough now to doubt all these Moslems placed outside the influence of civilization ; for like this precious town of Arkiko, they seem compounded of the vices of savage and civilized life, without any of the virtues of either."

"Faith, ye speak like a book, Master Ned," replied Peter ; after which scarcely one unnecessary word was spoken until, with bag and baggage, we were traversing the vast plain beyond the town. At daybreak we found ourselves in sight of the Taranta mountain, the apex of which is lost in the clouds ; but just as we had begun to breathe a little freely, and without fear of the Naybe's brigands, the guide, a Job's comforter, told us that it was reported, by travellers who had entered the town the day previously, that the road between the mountain and Arkiko was infested by the Dobas, a Mahometan tribe of savages, who hold it to be unlawful for any man among them to marry until he has slain twelve Christians.

"Bedad, then," said Peter, "if we fall in with the gintlemen, let us hope they'll be all married!"

During that day, however, we pursued our journey without meeting with any animal more dangerous than an antelope, which I bagged, and Joas dressed, over a bramble fire; and, by the way, I never better enjoyed venison; yet it was served without a dish; a few clean rushes answering for plates, and our fingers for forks. After this meal we pitched our tent beneath a large tamarind-tree. To keep off wild beasts, we lighted a fire at each of its four sides, and with the exception that we kept the fuel alive turn by turn, we slept as soundly as in Mivart's best bed.

The next day our course lay in the dried bed of a torrent, which wound among mountains of no very great height, yet bare, stony, and so beset with precipices, that for safety we had to depend upon our mules' surefootedness. During this day the atmosphere had been calm and serene; towards evening, however, just when we were on the lookout for a fitting spot to pitch our tent, clouds that had been slightly threatening in the eastern horizon suddenly overspread the sky, which at intervals became illumined by forked lightning; the thunder began to roll, or seemed to growl like a huge beast of prey about to spring upon its victim, and so murky and charged with sulphur was the atmosphere that we could with difficulty breathe.

"A storm is brewing; let us seek shelter beneath yon shelving rock," I said.

"Bedad, it's only fit to be hung out to dry we'll be; for we'll get clean washed out before we get there," replied Peter; and in an instant the darkened heavens became as one sheet of lurid flame, a thunder clap shook the earth to *its centre*, and, goad as we would, we could scarcely make

the mules move, so terrified were the poor animals at the fusilade of hailstones, each as large as grape-shot, falling on all sides of us. Thus, when we did succeed in reaching a place of shelter, we were literally drenched to the skin. I had never witnessed, even in India, so terrific a storm. In less, however, than an hour from the first howl of the wind, the clouds dispersed, as if thrust aside by the glorious sun in displeasure at the earth being darkened, and the tempest had entirely ceased; indeed, but for the uprooted trees, and the formidable torrents now pouring down the mountain side, there was no token of the war of elements that had so recently disturbed the earth.

For the rest of the day our course lay through a hilly country; it was as yet the most toilsome part of our journey, but afforded a fine study for the student of natural history. The trees, richly foliaged, were filled with birds of every hue; families of apes, and large families too, would every now and then run forth from some cavity in the mountain side; the roar of the lion, the growl of the tiger, saluted our ears; and from time to time a wild boar, hyena, gazelle, or antelope would dart across our path, as if pointing the partridges, grouse, and guinea-fowl which abound in that region.

Most interesting, however, for the ethnologist, were parties of two different tribes we fell in with. The first, a number of *Black Shohos* with bushy hair: the women wearing coarse cotton shirts, reaching to their feet, and girdled with a leathern belt; the men attired in short cotton breeches, which reached no lower than the middle of the thighs, and a goat's skin across their shoulders, and armed with lance in hand and knife in their belt.

The other party we met belonged to the tribe *Hazorta*, a people who, although near neighbors of the *Black Shoho*,

are, curiously enough, *copper colored*. The cause of this marked difference in the color of such near neighbors I believe is not known. Remarkable, however, as this fact is, it is scarcely so much so as to find amongst the Abyssinians families of brothers and sisters as opposite to each other in color as the squares on a chess board. Mr. Parkyns thus gives us his opinion :

“This variety of complexion, observable in both sexes, is, I should think, attributable to the mixture of races of which the nation is composed. Although in some districts certain colors appear to predominate slightly over others, yet I have never seen any district, and seldom even any family, in which you could trace uniformity of color ; in features, perhaps, you might do so. The family of Afa Memher Wady Hyl, chief of Rohabaita, claims descent from Greek ancestors ; and certainly if the prominence of features of some of its members be any proof whereby to substantiate such claim, they have it most decidedly. The old man’s face, though copper-colored, is quite European ; his son, Deftera Maherca (since dead), had a nose that would eclipse the largest that ever *Punch* has dared to attribute to the great Duke, a high, marked forehead, well-formed chin and mouth, and was in nowise to be recognized as an Abyssinian, but for his rather too curly hair, dark complexion, and hollow cheeks. Still, owing to there being few (I might almost say *no*) binding marriages in these countries, a man may have around him a family, the produce of five or six different wives ; and, as many of them naturally take after their respective mothers, you may see a brother almost white with a soot-black sister, as in the case of Maherca and his sister Martou, who, though very pretty, was jet black ; or *vice versa*, as in the case of my servant, Binasai, who was as black as a coal,

short and thick-set, and had a sister who was taller than himself, and nearly as fair as an Egyptian."

I have mentioned the Shohos first. It was after parting, however, with the Hazorta, and as we entered a valley, that we met them. They were encamped in a kind of portable camp, the huts of which were formed of straw and the branches of trees. These temporary homesteads (for the Shohos are a migratory tribe) were neatly made, and arranged so as to form a circle, with one or two spaces left as entrances, in which the cattle were penned for the night.

Now, as our guide belonged to the same tribe, we were very hospitably received by the chief, who offered us skins for beds, a large bowl of warm milk for supper, and a lodging within his own hut. The first two we gladly accepted; the last, for sanitary reasons, we respectfully declined, preferring, indeed, the close proximity of the cattle; and so, without even troubling ourselves to pitch the tent that night, we spread the skins provided by the chief near the cattle-pen, and beneath the spreading branches of a large tamarind-tree, not at all doubting that, fatigued as we were, we should sleep soundly; but fate willed otherwise. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. "Peter," I cried, pulling him by the ear, "the cattle are alarmed; there is some wild animal at hand!"

"Bedad, there is, and I thought it had hold of me by the ear!" he said, as he caught up his rifle.

"Stay," cried Joas, who had been awakened by the same sounds; "remain where you are. It is a leopard, and is in the pen; if alarmed, it may quit the sheep, and make towards us."

The next minute, the cause of the lowing and bleating.

was apparent : a large black leopard came, cat-like, stealthily through an aperture which it had evidently previously clawed in the side of the pen, bearing in its mouth a fine lamb.

"The big thief! — but I'll make him drop his plunder!" said Peter, preparing to fire.

"No; wait! — there is a four-footed policeman on the watch!" I said, as I heard the hideous laughing of a hyena.

"Good!" cried Joas. "Reserve your charges; there is probably a pack at hand."

Whether at the sound of our voices, or at the screeching laugh of its enemy, I know not, but the leopard, dropping the sheep, and placing one of its huge paws upon the poor animal, turned on the light from its glaring eyes, as if they had been a couple of bull's-eye lanterns, and gave a terrific growl; and, as if this had been the note of defiance it had been awaiting, a hyena darted forth from a thick copse, at a bound reached the leopard, and with one grasp of its powerful jaws brought the lamb-stealer to the ground.

Now I lifted my rifle; but Peter — who had cried "Well done!" at the neatness with which the hyena had brought the other beast to the ground — exclaimed, "By the powers, it's a fair fight, Master Ned! Don't interfere; let 'em have it out, and we'll settle with the winner!"

By this time the Shohos had become aroused; but before they could assemble in sufficient force to attack the beast, — remember, they carried nothing but lances and knives, — the leopard had been nearly torn to pieces. Seeing, however, the men — from whom the beast was endeavoring to escape — approaching, the hyena caught up the lamb in its jaws, and, giving another hideous laugh, bounded towards the copse; but, mid-distance, the brute

rolled over, pierced by a bullet from my rifle, to the delight and consternation of the Shohos, — delight at the rescue of their lamb ; but consternation at the cause of the death of the hyena. They had probably never seen gun or pistol before, and most assuredly had never heard the report of firearms. One of them seeing the hole in the carcass made by the ball, placed his finger in it in a most mysterious manner ; nor could he comprehend the cause of the hole even when, by the interpretation of our guide, I endeavored to explain it, showing both rifle and ball. As for the rifle, he danced round about it, stared at it, keeping at a respectful distance, stretching forth his body ; and he even ventured to place the tip of his finger upon the barrel, and talked to it coaxingly ; but at length, his superstitious fears getting the mastery of his curiosity, he ran away, muttering some words which were translated to us by Joas as “ Good devil kill bad beast.”

It is here worthy of remark, that there seems to be a natural antagonism between the dog-kind hyena and the cat-kind leopard, as between the dog and cat. Leopards never, except by accident, inhabit the same region with hyenas. It is also curious that the hyenas, who are much stronger than leopards, when possible flee from man ; whereas leopards, ever in terror of the hyena, will attack man. The Rev. S. Gobat, a missionary, relates that, on a certain occasion, this antagonism between them saved his life. He had once slept between a leopard and a hyena, both at a short distance from him, the hyena having restrained the fierceness of the leopard during the whole night. In the morning, he says, he threw a stone at the hyena, whereupon the leopard went away of its own accord.

So delighted were the Shohos at the destruction of two beasts, one of which was as great an enemy to themselves

as the other was to their cattle, that they not only sent us a large bowl of milk, some bread, and a quarter of the lamb for breakfast, but, while we were at that meal, the chief begged our acceptance of a young cow.

"Shure it's very kind of the black gintleman, but what will we do with her on the journey?" said Peter, giving words to the thoughts that were passing through my mind.

"She would serve us for *brounde* on the way," was the reply.

"But what is *brounde*?" both Peter and I asked.

"Raw meat," explained Joas.

"Does the gintleman mean we are to kill the cow and carry the meat with us the whole journey?" asked Peter.

"No," fully explained Joas; "there is no necessity to *kill* the cow; it would be a foolish extravagance to do so; when necessary you can cut a steak off the live animal, put a plaster on the wound, and drive her on again till you may require another."

"Are you serious, my friend?" I asked.

"It's poking fun at us, you are, Mr. Joas?" said Peter; for although, like me, he had heard of such a custom, he could not credit its truth.

"No, Aito, no; I am serious, the chief of the Shohos is serious; it is the custom of our country."

"Then it's a lot of unchristian beasts and cannibals you are, Mr. Joas; and the deuce of a bit of meat will I taste while I am in the country!" replied Peter, indignantly. "But," he added, "you *don't* mean it? it is poking fun at us you are?"

Then, remembering the story told by Bruce, — that story which gained for the traveller the reputation of a very Munchausen among romancers, and brought odium upon his work, — I could no longer doubt the chief's seri-

ousness, and, much to his disgust, I duly declined the proffered gift.

Apropos of Bruce's story, and as my readers may or may not remember it, I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with it. Bruce and his party at one portion of their journey overtook three native soldiers, who were driving a cow before them. The animal being so lean, the traveller felt certain it could not have been fattened for killing; he therefore concluded it had been stolen. While he was meditating upon this little affair, which, in my opinion, was not his business, the drivers suddenly tripped up the cow, and so gave the poor animal a very rude fall; but this was only the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her fore-feet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to Mr. Bruce's very great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly before her hind legs, and gave a very deep wound in the upper part of her buttock. From the time the traveller had seen them throw the beast upon the ground, he had rejoiced, thinking that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to them; and he was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say that they were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where he intended. Upon Mr. Bruce's proposing they should bargain for part of the cow, his people answered that they had already learned in conversation that the men were not then going to kill her; that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened Mr. Bruce's curiosity. He let his attendants go forward, and stayed himself till he saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef steaks, cut out of the higher

part of the buttock of the beast. How it was done he cannot positively say ; because, judging the cow was to be killed from the moment he saw the knife drawn, he was not anxious to view that catastrophe, which was by no means an object of curiosity. Whatever way it was done, it surely was adroitly, and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields.

One of the men still continued holding the head, while the other two were busy in curing the wound. This, too, was done not in an ordinary manner ; the skin which had covered the flesh that was taken away was left entire, flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding part by two or more small skewers or pins. Whether they had put anything under the skin, between that and the wounded flesh, Mr. Bruce could not tell ; but at the river side where they were, they had prepared a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the wound. They then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them, to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening.

Now, since there exists in all ordinary readers an unwillingness to believe whatever passes the limits of their ordinary observation — and Bruce wrote his book before steamships or railways were known, and when African travel was so rare, that the traveller was looked upon by the masses as a species of licensed lunatic — we need not wonder that such a story as the foregoing was regarded by the good people of England as an insult to their common sense ; in plain words, that Bruce was looked upon as literally a great storyteller. In justice, therefore, to the reputation of a good and indefatigable man, and in the cause of truth, my reader should know that Bruce's *veracity has by degrees* been proved. Salt, the traveller, in his

footsteps, in his first narrative, denies the cutting off the flesh from the *living* animal; but in the second, he very candidly admits that the observations of a fellow-traveller *proved* the savage custom to exist, and to be distinguished by a peculiar name, that of cutting the *shulada*. So far, Mr. Salt, who was but an ordinary traveller through the country. Mr. Mansfield Parkyns, a living writer, who not only travelled through Abyssinia, but lived in the country, and as an Abyssinian, for a lengthened period, says:

"I have been often asked about '*the steak cut from the live cow*,' and have only to say, once for all, I *firmly believe that Bruce saw what he has stated*. While I was in Abyssinia, a soldier, in conversation with me and several others, volunteered a story quite similar to Bruce's, both as regards the manner of operation and the reasons why it was performed. On inquiry he said that such a practice was not uncommon among the Gallas, and even occasionally occurred amongst themselves, when, as in the case Bruce relates, a cow had been stolen or taken in a foray. The men who drive her, being hungry, have no alternative but to go on fasting, kill the cow, or act as described. The first they will not do; the second would imply the necessity of carrying home the residue of the meat, or leaving it to the jackals, neither of which would suit their inclinations; so the third is adopted."

CHAPTER XL

THE WILD SHOHOS — TEKLA HAIMANOUT.

FOR some little time the good-natured chief, who could not comprehend our prejudices in the matter, sulked at the refusal of the cow ; indeed, I doubt whether he would have spoken to me again had it not been for his intense curiosity about the "good devil" that had killed the two wild animals. To soothe him I showed him the bullets, explained the use of the lock, and snapped the cap several times ; then, as he desired, I had loaded the piece, intending to show him how I could bring down one of the gazelles or antelopes, or perhaps another hyena, when the Shohos, who had surrounded Peter, and like him were squatting upon the ground, simultaneously gave a short, sharp, angry growl, and put their hands upon the handles of their knives. A boy was upon the floor at full length, kicking and roaring. Peter, who had evidently knocked him into that position, exclaimed to the angry parents and friends around, "Ugh ! my friends, you needn't look so savage ; the small devil was peeling the skin off me leg without me knowing it !"

Joas came to the rescue, and explained to the Shohos the cause of Peter's anger ; and in turn told us that the boy, who had never before seen a white man, had taken it into his head that we were painted ; and, with a resolution *worthy* of a hater of shams, had determined to expose the

deceit to his seniors. Thus, while Peter had been talking to Joas, and gesticulating for the amusement of our hosts, the Shohos, "the little nigger," to use Peter's own words, "had tried to pull off me stocking; but such an operation being a novelty, the divil had pealed some of the skin off me leg!"

These mutual explanations having been made, good-humor was restored, and another bowl of hot milk placed before us. As the chief of the strangers, the bowl was first offered to me; but while I was drinking —

Bang! — a simultaneous shrieking! and the chief of the Shohos fell backwards into the midst of our party, who, with a yell of horror and alarm, took to their feet, and ran helter-skelter in every direction. As we afterwards were told, they believed that the evil spirit had come among them, determined upon their destruction.

Of course, as old soldiers, Peter and I first looked to the wounded man, for so we believed him to be. A minute's examination, however, and Peter said:

"Bedad, it's lucky for the old gentleman he isn't a casualty!"

The chief arose unhurt, and walking up to the rifle, which lay upon the floor, kicked it, exclaiming:

"*Wa* — you naughty devil!"

At which, of course, we could but laugh, so comically serious was the expression upon his face. The explanation is, that while I had been engaged, the chief had taken up the piece, and, monkey-like, holding it to his shoulder, as he had seen me do in snapping caps, had pulled the trigger, and the piece (he said, in spite, because it knew he wasn't its master!) had "kicked;" but the fright, more than the blow, or both combined, had sent him over into the midst of the breakfast party.

"Bedad," said Peter, when Joas told him the foregoing, it'll teach the gentleman not to play with edged tools. It's lucky for him that the bullet only found it's billet in the side of the hut. You can come in, my friends; the play's over, and no harm done!" added Peter, as one or two of the Shohos cautiously put their heads into the hut to see what mischief had happened to their chief. Seeing he was alive and unhurt, they gave the signal to others outside, and in a few minutes the whole tribe were upon their knees around us, muttering prayers, and kissing our hands and feet.

"Poor creatures, it's a bad state they are in!" cried, the astonished Peter; but as two of them struggled which should clutch his knees, trying to shake them off, he angrily exclaimed, "Get out, wid ye, ye devils! Is it after peeling my skin off again you'd be?"

"Don't be angry with them," said Joas, "for they are ready to worship you, believing you have killed the bad spirit, and brought their chief to life again."

"The poor haythens!" replied Peter, pitifully and benevolently, but perhaps without meaning it, placing his hand upon the head of one and patting it, adding, reflectively, "but it's little better you or I had been, Master Ned, if we hadn't had schooling."

Shortly afterwards we took leave of the friendly Shohos, hoping to reach the foot of the mountain Taranta before night. On our road we fell in with a cloud of locusts, that plague of Africa. These devouring insects, it is said, reduce the districts they visit to a more completely ruined state than if consumed by fire. If general, they would entirely depopulate Abyssinia; but, fortunately, their ravages are usually confined to one province in one year. A *Jesuit missionary* says:

"The people when they see the locusts 'become as dead men,' and cry out, 'We are undone, for the locusts are come.'" He adds, "The embassy [of which he was a member] met numbers of men and women going to other countries in search of food, which they could no longer find in their native district. The Romish priests, however, undertook to deliver the country from this plague. They collected (*'Credat Judæus'*) a number of the locusts, and made a solemn adjuration that within three hours they should depart for the sea, the mountains, or the land of the *Moors*, and should let *Christians* alone. The locusts present were then dismissed to carry this admonition to their brethren. Accordingly, *as soon* as the intelligence could be conveyed, the whole body of locusts put themselves in motion, — some flying *before*, some *after* the missionaries."

This voracious gentleman forgets to add that a violent thunderstorm arose soon after, and the dead locusts were seen piled up in heaps along the banks of the rivers.

By way of retaliating upon these insects, some of the natives of Africa eat them. They are prepared by pulling off the legs, and roasting them like coffee upon an iron dish. And why not? They are not particularly delicious food, but there is nothing disagreeable in the flavor, at least that would prevent a hungry man enjoying them; and did not St. John the Baptist live upon locusts and wild honey?

Towards evening we reached the foot of the mountain, where we pitched our tent for the night. In the morning at daybreak we commenced the ascent, which was slow and toilsome in the extreme; but the more so that we had to keep a sharp lookout for the hyenas, at this place more daring and ravenous, who would every now and then rush

forth from a cavity or crevice, and make for one of the mules. Then the upper portion was rugged, craggy, and aloping; there we were compelled to walk, and literally drag the animals after us. Thus, by the time we arrived at the village of Halai, at the summit, our hands and feet were completely lacerated by the thorn bushes and stones. Then, again, we had on the road been sadly annoyed by beggars, who, notwithstanding our difficulties, continued to pester us for alms, using their strongest exhortation, "For the sake of Mary! for the sake of St. Tekla Haimanout!" Throwing now and then a few small coins, we hoped we had rid ourselves of both beggars and St. Tekla Haimanout. To our sorrow, however, we were mistaken; for, upon entering the large hut which served for the inn of Halai, we found ourselves in the midst of mendicants and pilgrims, clad and unclad, and some in sound health, but the greater part suffering from some hideous disease, and all of them with the name of St. Tekla Haimanout in their mouths.

"Faith!" said Peter, "it's a pity the Doctor's not here — he'd have plenty of practice; but, Master Ned, dear, a hospital after an action is nothing to it."

"You are right, Peter. It is worse, far more sickening, than a pest-house! Better, far better pitch our tent in a field."

This we did, and before we went to sleep, Joas told us that all the unfortunates we had seen were making the pilgrimage to the shrine and waters of the saint whose name was in every mouth.

"But, Joas," said I, "relate the story of this celebrated personage; I am too much fatigued to sleep."

Accordingly he told us, as near as I can remember, as follows:

THE MARVELLOUS HISTORY OF TEKLA HAIMANOUT.

"Tekla Haimanout was descended from a priest in the suite of Menilek, son of the Queen of Sheba, and born in the province of Shoa, about the middle of the fifteenth century. On the day of his mother's marriage, the unbelieving Gallas (the legend says) made an irruption into the province, and by some mishap the pious lady fell into the power of the invaders, who made her a captive. The transcendent loveliness of the Christian turned the whole army distraught, and the stoutest warrior strove more sedulously to win a smile from the beautiful captive than trophies from the enemy.

"King Matolama, the commander of the invading forces, on hearing that a poor slave had bewitched the hearts and paralyzed the arms of all his brave troops, ordered her to be conducted into his presence, then and there to receive the punishment due to her art. The hapless captive went forth, enshrouded in her striped *shama*, to exchange a sorrowful life for a martyr's bliss. Her seductive charms were no sooner unveiled to the admiring gaze of the sovereign than he saw that her magic lay in the lustre of a rich eye, and the grace of a faultless form. Susceptible of beauty, like every other prince, Matolama fell desperately in love with his *Amhara* captive. His suit, though ardent and sincere, was repelled with meekness and dignity. Skilled in the knowledge of the female heart, the prince abstained from all further importunity, and assiduously betook himself to gain by kindness a love which he could not command by force. Gentle treatment from a king, few female hearts, the chronicler adds, can resist; and to this rule the amiable *Amhara* formed no exception.

"Her distress had already lasted many a month; but whether she was subdued by grief or won by tender solicitation, is not stated, nor is the omission of great importance; suffice it for us to know that she became reconciled to her fate, and was prepared to resign herself to idolatry and the enamored Matolama.

"The auspicious day at length approached. People at a very early hour began to flock into the royal city to witness the happy nuptials of their beloved king and his beauteous Christian captive. The idol temple in which the ceremony was to be performed was adorned with garlands and flowers, culled from the remotest forests and glens of the empire; there was dancing and singing in every street and in every house, except in the poor bride's chamber. Awakened from her stupor of sorrow, the poor hapless captive shed bitter tears of penitential contrition at the thought of her approaching infidelity to a youthful spouse and the paternal creed. In her misery and distraction, she called on Mary and all the other great saints her memory could recall; but no help came,—no succoring hand was extended towards her.

"The approach of the nuptial hour, so impatiently anticipated by her lover, was indicated to herself by the shadow of her own wan figure; and before she could make her choice between an idolatrous husband or a violent death, she was lifted on the shoulders of happy female slaves, and borne in great pomp to the heathen temple.

"Priests, arrayed in costly robes, at once commenced the ceremony, when suddenly the roof of the edifice burst open, and an angel, gorgeously arrayed, appeared in the midst of the terror-stricken crowd, and, lifting the trembling princess on his outspread wings, he safely carried her to the *land of her birth*, and the home of her desolate lord. Some

time after this happy reunion the pious couple were blessed with a son. The infant, who was destined to swell the ranks of the celestial nobility, came into the world accompanied by extraordinary signs and prodigies. A glorious light rested for several days over the parental house. At the baptism of the child, the priest was so dazzled by its supernatural beauty, that, lost in admiration, he dropped the babe, and might have killed it, had not an invisible hand kept it suspended above the hard floor. These, and many similar signs, were, as the wise men of those days pointed out, sure indications of the babe's glorious future career. The infant, as predicted, grew up to be a pious, clever, and faultless youth; his fame as a preacher very soon spread far and wide, and high and low came from the remotest provinces to sit at the feet of the wonderful evangelist. Among the ladies of Ethiopia his handsome person and unequalled talent excited quite a spirit of rivalry; but, despite their deep sighs and heart-melting glances, he most relentlessly persevered in obstinate celibacy.

"His mother came to the aid of a despairing wealthy maiden, and in an affectionate and supplicatory tone she entreated him, by taking to himself a pious wife, to soothe her own declining days with the love and attentions of a good daughter. Not willing to disobey a command of the decalogue, the devout youth sought refuge from the snare by which he was beset, in a convent at Debra Damo, in Tigré, where he solemnly assumed the skullcap of the monk. The mortifications, self-imposed penances, and incredibly long fasts which followed his initiation into the monastic brotherhood are faithfully recorded in the annals of the church, for the edification of the faithful.

"Wearied at length with this mode of life, Tekla Hai-

manout took the monk's staff, and set out on a perilous pilgrimage to the tomb of the Saviour. Many unfortunate adventures happened to him among the unbelieving Moslems, but he resignedly submitted to every ill-treatment which men and fiends could inflict upon him. Having prayed at the Holy Sepulchre, he retraced his steps to Egypt, where the Copt Patriarch ordained him priest. He now intended to devote himself to the conversion of the followers of the false prophet; but the patriarch, who did not wish to share the martyrdom for which the young priest so ardently longed, requested him to spend his zeal on a people more worthy of the gospel than the Christian-hating Arabs. Obedience to a superior being a virtue he always practised, he at once wrapped around his emaciated frame his old skin cloak, and proceeded to the Galla country, where his mother had been kept prisoner. The idea of rewarding good for evil was so novel to these idolaters, that in thronging multitudes they repaired to the spot where the reputed son of the lady who had so miraculously escaped from the power of their late king was about to preach.

"His zealous efforts were most signally blessed in the conversion of hundreds of thousands who had never before heard the name of Christ. The king, and most of his subjects, who in a very short time had thrown their idols to the bats and moles, were anxious that the good man should settle down amongst them; but a desire to reform certain abuses at Debra Damo forbade him to accept the grateful invitation.

"The fame of the great achievements of Aboona Tekla Haimanout had by this time spread through the length and breadth of the land; and wherever he came, old and *young, sick and whole*, prostrated themselves in the dust

before his feet, and implored his benediction. At Debra Damo the brotherhood did not much sympathize in the general jubilee that greeted the austere monk. The monastery there stands on the summit of a perpendicular rock, and being quite inaccessible, no visitor can reach it unless drawn up by a rope. The Evil One — probably, I presume, jealous of his own — did not like the ascetic to tamper with the merry fellows on the rock, and to effect his wicked purpose, he maliciously cut the frail support when Tekla Haimanout was in mid air; and probably he would have been dashed to pieces in a ravine below, had not immediately six wings unfurled themselves under his garb, and borne him aloft. In commemoration of this miraculous volant power, the saint is represented, in most of the churches dedicated to him, as nearly smothered in a profusion of gorgeous plumage.

“The passion for self-discipline and maceration, in which he had indulged in early life, became more intense as he advanced in years. Tenantless wastes and malarious jungles had lost their attractions; nor was it quite *en règle* that a man who aspired after beatification should visit spots that were the resort of inferior mortals. In this perplexity, he hit upon an original idea of mortifying the flesh. There is in Shoa a small lake, which the saint, in his peregrinations, had often passed; to these waters he now repaired. The good people who followed him from all parts to hear his discourses and to obtain his blessing, entreated him not to expose his precious person to the alligators, and other aquatic monsters; but the holy man, who knew that all his exploits for the glory of the church had not yet been accomplished, fearlessly stepped into the deep. Seven successive years he continued in the water,

and probably he would have expired on his liquid couch, had not one of his legs dropped off.

"The clamor for this valuable relic created quite a dissension in the church ; but the monarch judiciously put a stop to the fierce war between the rival claimants by ordering it to be kept as a palladium in the royal metropolis. This sacred talisman possesses more wonderful sanitary virtues than all the drugs in the universe. Patients from every province of the country visit the shrine to make votive offerings and to quaff the healing waters in which the saint's leg is weekly washed. Many of the sufferers are of course disappointed in their hope of a cure ; but then the fault is not in the relic, but in their own want of faith."

"It is an amusing legend," I said, musing.

"It's a haythen story altogether, and I don't believe one word of it ! Only think, Master Ned, of the old gentleman being seven years in water without a drop of whiskey in it ; and, as for his leg, I wouldn't give a wisp of straw for it, nor for the water ei — ei — either ;" and this last word quite exhausting his wakefulness, which, out of politeness to Joas, had been stretched to unnatural tension, Peter fell off to sleep, and I soon followed his example.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BITTER BIT; OR, A HOLY KIDNAPPER AND HIS VICTIMS.

JOAS was up and astir two hours before me. As I opened my eyes he was entering the tent.

"Aito," he said, "I have news of Esther and the good Doctor."

"What news, Joas? — *good*?"

"Yes, Aito; at least *not* bad, for it assures us they are alive, unharmed."

"How *know* you this?"

"From some slave-dealers who have this morning arrived in Halai. Three days since, in the Tzanna wilderness, they encountered a band of Gallas who had with them two captives, — a woman and a Frank."

"Then it is good news, for it places us upon the trail," said I, joyfully; but misgivings coming across my mind, I added, "It is possible this man and woman may not be those we seek."

"No; Aito, it is not possible. There is but *one* good Frank doctor, *one* Esther, in Abyssinia, and now we are upon their trail."

"Perhaps you are right, Joas; but did you learn in what direction they were going?"

"Aito, yes; towards Adowa, the capital of Tigré. Let us waste no time, and we may yet overtake them."

"Right, Joas; not a moment must be lost!" I replied.

and, arousing Peter, we made a hasty breakfast of milk, fruits, and bread, struck our tent, and in less than an hour afterwards were descending the green slope of the mountain in the direction of Dixan, the first *town*, even as Halai is the first *village*, in Abyssinia.

The Abyssinian side of the mountain is inhabited by a gamboge-colored people, whose chief employment is the growing of wheat and tending the silken-haired, wide-horned herds of the "well-to-do" denizens of Dixan. Now, although during the day we had seen hundreds of these people at their vocations, even at nightfall, and when we had reached midway, we had not come across one single house, hut, or tent.

"In the name of all that's gracious, where do these poor people rest at night?" I said.

"Maybe, Master Ned, it's in holes in the ground, like rabbits," said Peter.

"In recesses like that yonder," replied Joas, pointing to a wide fissure in the rocky side of the mountain, at a distance from us of half a dozen yards.

"Not a bad place either for travellers; we have slept in a worse, Master Ned," said Peter.

"Right, Peter; let us overhaul the interior. If there be room enough for men and beasts, we can't do better than take up our quarters there for the night."

"Room enough!" cried Peter, who by this time was sufficiently in advance to get a pretty good view; "bedad, sir, I take it there is room enough for a regiment!"

My servant was right. Upon examination, we found that the cavern was wide, lofty, and of great length, probably three hundred feet; indeed, it was very nearly being a natural arcade, or, rather, tunnel; for by the light at the *other end*, we could see that it passed right through a

ridge of the mountain. Well, having explored this place with lighted torches, to see that we might not have fellow-lodgers in the shape of wild beasts or venomous reptiles, we secured the awning to the sides, made a tolerable supper, spread the mats, and stretched ourselves for sleep.

Before, however, we could close our eyes, we heard voices, as if in anger, at the mouth of the cavern.

"Hilloa! who have we here?" I said.

"Only some travellers, like ourselves, benighted," replied Peter.

"No; not so. Listen," whispered Joas. And as in the midst of the voices we could distinguish one as if groaning in terror, he added in the same low tone, "Robbers plundering, perhaps murdering some hapless traveller! But softly! Let us creep forward; they are only at the *mouth*, not *in* the cavern."

So, upon hands and knees, with revolver in my belt, and my companions with rifles in hand, we crept along. We soon reached the embouchure. Fortunately, about half across the wide mouth there grew a tall plant. Through the scant foliage, aided by a brilliant moon — ay, so brilliant that those who have never quitted Europe cannot picture to their imaginations its light — we beheld the following *tableau vivant*.

"To the right, a chain — literally a chain, for they were linked together, wrist and wrist — of three persons, an elderly man and two boys. To the left, three fierce-looking, turbaned Moors. Between these, upon the ground, writhing, groaning, and bound hand and foot, lay an old priest. Kneeling at the feet of the three Moors was a woman, with fierce gestures begging hard to be permitted to tear off the priest's beard, that he might be made to look a little younger, and so fetch a better price in the market.

"They are slave-dealers, and have stolen these people," whispered Joas to me.

"The woman speaks wisdom; the old rogue merits it, too, from her hands; she shall have her will," replied one of the Moors. Whereupon the female, with a yell of fiendish delight, fell upon the old man, and plucked so fiercely at his beard that he screamed with agony.

"The old fellow shall not be thus tortured," I whispered.

"No," said Peter, "including the woman, there are four. You take two; I'll bring down at least a brace of these night-birds." Whereupon, rushing forth simultaneously, Peter clutched two of the Moors, I the other, and Joas the woman. So sudden was the attack, that, believing us to be demons of the mountain, their teeth chattered, they fell upon their knees, and prayed we would not injure them.

"Good Mr. Demons," cried the craven rogues, "pray hurt us not; we have done no harm; we are not thieves. these people are our lawful slaves, and we are carrying them to Massawa for the market at Cairo."

"Good Mr. Demons," said the priest, evidently delighted at our attack upon his enemies, "believe them not. These fellows are rogues and thieves who have stolen *me*, a priest of the holy Monastery of Damo, to sell into slavery."

"Brave warriors!" here interposed the woman, — "for brave warriors, and not demons, my heart tells me you are, — it is true these Moors are rogues, who have *bought* my husband, children, and me; but they are angels of goodness by the side of this old villain of a priest; for the Moors *only* bought, while he *stole*, and then sold us."

"It is too complicated a piece of business altogether to settle in a minute. In the meantime we will let the priest *remain as he is*, and tie up the Moors," said I.

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To complete this arrangement was but the work of a few minutes, as we had plenty of cord among our baggage. We then sat down and listened to the woman's story. It was to the following effect:

Two priests of the Monastery of Damo — namely, the old man we had found bound, and the younger, who was secured to the two boys — had long been intimate friends. The youngest was married, and had two children, both sons; the other, who was old and childless, one day reproved his friend for keeping his children at home idle, and not putting them to some vocation by which they might gain their bread. The married priest pleaded poverty, and his want of relations to assist him; on which the other offered to place the eldest son with a rich friend of his own, who had no children, and where he should want for nothing. The proposal was accepted, and the young lad, about ten years of age, was thereupon delivered by his father to the old priest, who at once took the boy to Dixan, and treacherously sold him. Upon the old priest's return, after giving the father a splendid account of his son's reception, treatment, and prospects, by way of proof he gave him a piece of cotton cloth as a present from his son's pretended patron.

The younger child, about eight years old, hearing the good fortune of his elder brother, became so importunate to be allowed to go and visit him, that the parents were obliged to humor him, and consent. But the old priest had a scruple, saying he would not take charge of so young a boy unless his mother went with him. This being settled, the old priest conveyed them to the market at Dixan, where he sold both the mother and the remaining child. Again returning to the father, the old rogue told him that his wife would only stay a short time, and, moreover, expected her husband

would fetch her upon a certain day. The day named having arrived, the two priests went together to see the mother and sons; but upon entering Dixan, the father was himself sold into slavery by his friend, although not to the same Moor to whom his family had been sold, but to two others, who, becoming partners in the venture, agreed to give the old priest forty cotton cloths, — that is, £10 sterling, — for the husband, wife, and children.

The payment of the money, perhaps the resentment of the kidnapped family, and the appearance of equity which the thing itself bore, suggested to the Moorish merchants that there would be more profit, and no additional risk, if they carried off the old priest likewise; but having come to Dixan, as it were, under public faith, in a trade that greatly interested the town, they were afraid to attempt anything against him whilst there. They began then, as it were, to repent of their bargain, from a pretended apprehension that they might be stopped and questioned at going out of the town unless he would accompany them to Halai, in consideration of which they would give him at parting two pieces of cloth, to be added to the other forty, which he was to take back to Tigré with him upon his return. The beginning of such expeditions is in the night, when all are asleep. They set out from Dixan, — the buyers, the seller, and the family sold, — and being arrived near the cavern, carried out their scheme.

"Thus, O Aito!" concluded the poor woman, addressing me, "the old rogue fell into the trap made by his own wickedness and avarice; for, setting out with the merchants at night to avoid observation, we had no sooner reached the mouth of this cavern, than the Moors fell upon him. The Aito knows the rest."

By the time the woman had finished her story, the

Moors and the rogue priest must have become convinced of our humanity ; for simultaneously they cried :

Merchants. "The woman's words are true, O Aitoes ! Wherein, then, are we to be blamed ? We were but carrying away goods for which we had paid."

Old Priest. "Believe them not, O Aitoes ! they are rogues and thieves, and the woman is as bad. On the word of a priest of Damo, I was stolen, and not paid for ; or why should they fall upon me on the mountain-side in the middle of the night ?"

The younger Priest. "The words of my wife, O Aitoes ! are good. This wicked man and false priest sold us to these Moors."

Joas (to me, in a whisper). "The woman is right. The old priest is a rogue. It was he who, under the guise of accompanying me to Jerusalem, left me in slavery at Jidda."

Myself. "Ah ! is it so ? then with thine own hands punish the wicked old wretch for the wrong he did thee."

Joas (piously). "'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.' Is it for a miserable worm to take into his own hands the punishment of a fellow-sinner ? No, Aito, leave him to his own conscience ; do naught save prevent him from doing further injury to others. Neither," he added, "let him know that in the black slave before him he sees the lad he so foully sold."

Myself. "So be it Joas." Then, holding my revolver in the face of the leading merchant, "Dogs of Mahometans ! in buying Christians in Abyssinia you have outraged the law of the great Kasai ; and terrible would be your doom were I to deliver you into the king's hands !"

Merchants. "What is written is written ; but the Frank

is just; he will not give over to death men for pursuing their honest vocation."

Myself (sternly). "Silence, dogs! Your lives shall be saved, conditionally that you swear by your false prophet to submit to remain in this cavern in silence, and without raising one shout for aid, till two hours after sunrise."

Merchants (simultaneously). "The Frank is a generous enemy. We swear!"

Myself. "Enough, I believe you will not break your oath. As for this old rogue of a priest, he shall remain your slave; when released from your cords, do with him as you will; no punishment can be too severe for his crimes. Now, Peter, release the animals, and tie these men up in their places."

Peter (dragging the three merchants towards the cavern, as if they had been a leash of refractory hounds). "Ay, ay, your honor; safe bind, safe find. By the powers, it's as good as a drum-head court-martial!"

Slave Family (falling on their knees as I cut their cords). "The Aito has come to his servants like a good spirit. The Lord of heaven bless him!"

Here the curtain may be said to have fallen upon my *tableau vivant*; for, the Moors and the priest being secured in the cavern, we mounted our mules, and with the released family, were speedily journeying down the mountain, and by two hours after sunset we entered Dixan, once the great depot of the slave trade in Abyssinia, which, by the way, has not greatly improved since the time of Bruce, who tells us: "The town of Dixan consists of Moors and Christians, and is very well peopled; yet the only trade of either of those sects is a very extraordinary one, that of selling children. The Christians bring such as they have stolen in Abyssinia to Dixan, as to a sure

deposit; and the Moors receive them there, and carry them to a certain market at Massawa, whence they are sent over to Arabia or India. The priests of the province of Tigré, especially those near the rock Damo, are openly concerned in this infamous practice; and some of these have been licensed by the sovereign to carry it on as a fair trade, upon paying so many firelocks for each dozen or score of slaves."

Illustrative of the superstition in which the spurious Christianity of the Abyssinians is entangled, we have the following legend concerning the Monastery of Devra Damo, to which the two priests belonged:

Abouna Aragawy was one of the nine missionaries sent to Abyssinia by St. Athanasius. His doctrine and the miracles which he wrought gained for him many followers, but from some of the unbelieving he suffered persecution. This is the account given by some historians; while others assert that, overcome by his popularity, he sought retirement from this world, in order to devote the remainder of his days to religious duty. Be that as it may, he came to the rock, on which is now the celebrated Monastery of Devra Damo. After walking several times round it, without finding any means of access to its summit, he prayed to the Almighty, who sent him an enormous boa-constrictor, which offered to carry him up in its mouth; but he said, "I fear your mouth; turn round and let me take your tail." So the snake did as he was desired, and the saint, holding fast by its tail, was drawn up to the summit of the rock in perfect safety. The snake having performed its duty, offered to leave the saint if he wished it; but Aragawy begged that it would remain; making, however, the condition of its not alarming or destroying any of his disciples who came to visit him. They then

took possession of the caves and holes which are in the mountain, where they are, by many, supposed to be still living. Some, however, pretend that the snake is dead; but no one is so wanting in faith as for a moment to deny that the saint yet lives there, and will continue to live till the day of judgment. No curious person, however, dares venture into the cave; the monks will not allow lights to be taken in, and the people assert that a spirit which protects the place will not permit any one who enters to come out alive. Probably there is a pit or chasm into which some one may have fallen in former times, and which has given rise to this superstition.

CHAPTER XIII.

TERRORS OF THE WILDERNESS.

APART from its unenviable notoriety as the great depot of the odious slave trade of Abyssinia, Dixan is far from being a pleasant place. It is extensive for an Ethiopian town ; but the flat-roofed houses, or rather huts, are uncleanly *without*, and within, reeking as they do with filth, picture to our mind a city of pig-sties. Then the inhabitants, compared with even the blacks of the interior, are monkey-faced and of the dirtiest hue, or, if I may use the term, faded black. Then they are ignorant, even for Savagedom, and so thoroughly idle, that it is the women alone who do the work in the fields, with their children slung on their backs ; although, as for the latter, they are, perhaps, not far worse than some European people I could name. But, on the other hand, let me speak well of the bridge that carried us over.

The Bahamagash — that is, a chief who unites in his single person the offices of first magistrate and chief priest — hearing that two Franks had entered the town, sent for us to his own house, where he treated us hospitably, and with what our neighbors across the channel would term “distinguished consideration.” How pressing was this gentleman’s kindness the reader will comprehend when I tell him that, as soon as we were seated, and a slave had brought in a dish of round balls, compounded of wild cel-

ery, curds, and ghee, the Bahamagash, as a sign of peculiar favor, fed us with his own hand ; that is, placing one hand at the back of the head, with the other he thrust the ball into the mouth — an operation to which, from politeness, I submitted. Peter, however, less complaisant, withdrew his head from the hands of the operator, declaring that he was neither a goose nor a magpie to be crammed after that pagan fashion.

Then, for a trifling consideration, our host, the next morning, provided us with a guide and a camel, saddled ready for our journey. *Apropos* of that saddle, it is sufficiently curious to merit a description.

It consists of four strong staves, about four feet in length, and as thick as a man's wrist ; two of these are intended for each side of the camel. At the distance of one third from the upper end are fixed small round pads of matting, stuffed with strips of the palm leaf ; these rest on the sides of the hump, and relieve this rather tender part from the pressure of the load. The lower ends of the two staves on each side are bound together ; but the upper extremities above the pads diverge to the distance of a foot or eighteen inches, the staves of either side being connected by ropes carried over the pads. A quantity of palm-leaf mats, six feet long and three feet broad, are first placed upon the back of the camel, and across these is thrown the saddle ; the two conjoined ends on either side are now fastened underneath the belly by a rope passing directly from the one to the other in a straight line ; no girding similar to the manner in which we saddle horses is resorted to, the saddle being thus fixed from the projecting extremities of the staves. On one side is suspended the burden that hangs upon the other, and thus, when properly adjusted, the weight of the two burdens tends to tighten

the rope beneath the belly of the animal, and prevents the whole from shifting during the journey. Another advantage derived from this kind of saddle is, that when the camel lies down, the whole weight of the burden is lifted up from the back; for the lower extremities of the staves come upon the ground before the belly of the animal, and thus support the load whilst it remains in that position. If proper attention be paid to the equal distribution of weight on each side when first loaded, the camel marches the whole day without any danger of casting its burden, unless the rope should happen to break which connects the lower ends of the staves of either side.

Too frequently the slaves of the owner neglect this important duty; and I have observed with what difficulty the narrow body of the camel has been able to contend against the unequal pressure upon its sides. In such cases, if attention be not paid to its loud moanings, and the restless movements of its head when vainly endeavoring to lift off the load from its back, the animal soon falls to the ground, unwilling or unable to proceed further without a readjustment of the loads.

Thus, being provided with a stout-limbed, fast-sailing "ship of the desert," we left Dixan the day after our arrival at that place. A long journey through a savage country was before us. Unfortunately, we had arrived four days too late to catch one of the caravans which periodically cross the wilderness from Dixan. To those who know naught of other travelling than by railroads or steamships, a description of an African party on its way across the wilds may be acceptable.

The guide's method of steerage is either by the stars or a sea-compass. A caravan often consists of two or three hundred men, and perhaps of a thousand beasts, of differ-

ent kinds, to secure them from the incursion of robbers. The merchandise is carried either on camels or dromedaries (whose shape is much the same), and the camel will carry seven hundredweight. The above-mentioned beasts kneel down to take up their burden, and will travel, when requisite, six days or more without drinking. There are no inns on the roads, for which reason travellers carry provisions and tents, which are not set up except in bad weather ; preferring, when it is fine, to lodge in the open air.

The slaves and servants dress their master's food on the road, in the following manner : They dig a hole in the ground, in which they make a fire and boil the meat, etc. As very little water is found in the desert, the travellers provide themselves with some, which they carry in goat-skins. Before the caravan first sets out, the merchants elect from among their body a commander, who regulates the order of the march, and settles all controversies which may happen ; but as there is room for committing various frauds in this employment (the captains paying the duties, etc., on the journey), few honest men are willing to accept it. The merchants commonly ride on mules or horses, and the poorer sort on asses. The Europeans are obliged to carry their wine in skins on horses ; the camel masters, who are Mahometans, not permitting their beasts to be loaded with wine, as they are sacred to Mahomet.

The caravans sometimes travel six hours, and at others twelve in a day, according as they come across water, halting at those places where they meet with any. Every master, with his servants, rides near his own goods, particularly if the night be dark, on account of thieves, who at those times frequently cut the strings by which the beasts *are fastened* to one another, and then drive them to some

distance before the loss is perceived. One inconvenience which those who travel in caravans often meet with is, that as water is generally found only in wells and cisterns, not more than two or three people can draw water at a time. Travellers are therefore sometimes forced to stay two hours or more before they can get any, owing to the rudeness of the camel drivers, who will not suffer any person to draw water until they have regaled their several beasts.

To have travelled in company with one of these caravans would have been not only safer, but far more agreeable. As, however, fate willed it otherwise, we resolved, like the old Puritan soldiers, "to place our trust in Providence, and keep our powder dry;" in other words, we kept the revolver and rifles charged, and our hunting-knives ready for immediate use. But, fortunately, the first day we were unmolested either by man or beast, and at night encamped comfortably beneath the spreading branches of a magnificent daros tree, at least eight feet in circumference.

Our second day began more ominously, at least for me. We had just finished our matutinal meal, and were about setting forth again, when, thrusting my hand into one of the bread-bags slung from the camel's neck, I pulled it suddenly back with a cry of pain.

• "What's ado, Master Ned?" cried Peter.

✓ "I am stung," I cried, "by some reptile!" And the pain at that moment was intense, shooting rapidly along my arm into the shoulder and neck; but my alarm became greatly increased, as Joas, who had divined the cause, lifted up the bag and turned out a large scorpion, at least one inch and a half in diameter. You may imagine my horror when I tell you, that I had been taught to believe that the most serious consequences would arise

from a wound of such a description. For a few moments I looked at it very seriously, with all the contentment of despair; the absence even of hope had made me tranquil; but at length the sharp, shooting, neuralgic twitches revived me, and I stamped on the ground with agony.

"Faith, it must have been a sharp bite to cause the master to make such queer faces!" said Peter, giving chase to the scorpion, which was now running at full speed, with its tail curved high over its back, and its sting displayed.

"Stay!" cried Joas, spatching the spear held by Ali, the camel-driver; and darting between Peter and the scorpion, he pinned the latter to the ground; then, with his knife, he amputated the last joint of the insect's tail, which held the sting, and crushing the body, he took it in his hand and began to rub my wound with the ichorous-looking juice which, instead of blood, appears to circulate through its veins, and in less than an hour the pain had left me.

Now, I have been more than once severely wounded in action, but upon neither occasion did my nervous system receive so great a shock. The truth is, I suppose, that there is something infinitely more terrible in the idea of being killed by a slight accident than on the battle-field, where death is ever more or less associated with the balm, glory. The accident, however, proved that the scorpion, like many other denizens of the wilds, is not so black as it is painted—in fact, that its sting is not dangerous. It is well that it is so comparatively harmless, at least in Abyssinia, for they are to be found beneath every large stone. Sometimes, on rolling a stone over, I have seen, in the shallow depression of the ground, the entrance to a nest of *these nauseous-looking* reptiles; and on removing a little

of the soil, have unearthed a mater-familias as large as a crown piece, semi-transparent, of a dirty, mottled yellow, with ten or twelve of her family running about in all directions, like huge spiders.

Resuming our journey, we passed across a close country, covered with brushwood, wild oats, and high, wavy grass, which brought us to a gorge, or narrow pass, between two stony hills.

"By the powers, that's a fine fellow!" cried Peter, as, entering the mouth of the pass, a great vulture arose and began sailing over our heads.

"Ay," said I, "but what is that black lump he has in his beak?"

"It is a human leg!" said Joas.

"A what!" I cried, as, with a shudder, I traced the resemblance to the limb named.

"The baste! the dirty cannibal!" said Peter; and at the same moment the carrion bird fell dead at our feet, from a well-aimed shot of his rifle.

"Look!" cried Joas, pointing to a spot a dozen yards ahead. "The Gallas have been this way. It is a murdered caravan!"

The sight was revolting; a cold aguish sensation crept over my heart: nearly twenty bodies lay blackening in the broiling sun!

"Poor men!" said Joas; "they doubtlessly formed part of the caravan which left Dixan four days before we reached that town."

"Faith, Master Ned," said Peter, shrugging his shoulders, "it's lucky we arrived in Dixan just in time to be too late for that same caravan."

"Not so, Peter; our party, armed as we are, might have saved the lives of these poor fellows."

"Bedad, your honor, you are right; that never entered my stupid head! It would have been a disgrace to us, at least to you and I, if we couldn't have thrashed half a hundred such cannibals!" replied Peter. "But," he added, "mayhap we may fall in with 'em yet, and have it out!"

"No, no," said Joas; "the Gallas never remain two days near the same spot."

"Well, well," said I, "never mind the Gallas; if we fall in with the wretches, we will fight them; but sufficient for the time is the evil thereof. In the meantime let us, in the name of common manhood, give their victims decent burial."

At once Peter, Joas, and I (Ali, the camel driver, had enough to do in looking after the animals), with hunting-knives and Ali's spear, set to work digging graves; but ere our work was scarcely begun, we were beset by hideous laughing hyenas, howling jackals, and screaming eagles, who, having for the nonce been frightened away by the noise of our coming and the crack of Peter's rifle, now returned to dispute our right to dispose of what, doubtlessly, they considered to be their lawful prey and spoil. For a time they kept at a respectful distance; but their appetites or instincts getting the better of their prudence, they at length approached so inconveniently, not to say dangerously near, that Peter, dropping his knife and snatching my revolver from my belt, said:

"If your honor and his highness Mr. Joas will just keep on digging, I will keep off my friends here."

This speech being followed by the crack, crack, crack of the pistol, the beasts and birds of prey ran or flew away, leaving us in possession of the field, and thus we *were enabled to bury the dead.* After this we resumed

our journey, and by evening reached a village, which, by the way, is engraven upon my memory from a curiosity in its immediate neighborhood — namely, a large church, entirely cut out of the solid rock ; one of its rooms being fifty feet by thirty, and another possessing a dome at least forty feet high. The walls are carved, and adorned with crosses, Ethiopic inscriptions, and paintings of our Saviour, the apostles, and St. George its patron saint.

Now, although churches are exceedingly numerous throughout Abyssinia, and the people are for the greater part professing Christians, it is rather *in profession* than practice, many of their practices being quite as near to Judaism as to Christianity ; but then, taking into consideration their boasted descent from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, it is not to be wondered at. Noticing this resemblance, a recent traveller has given us a very graphic description of those buildings :

“ Their very churches,” he says, “ remind one of the altars and temples spoken of in the Old Testament, not only from their being mostly built on high places, and surrounded by groves, but also from their internal construction. In general — that is, with the exception of a few square ones chiefly built by strangers, as, for example, that of Axum — the churches of Abyssinia are circular, and, in their external appearance, differ only from the better class of country huts from their being rather more regularly fashioned, somewhat ornamented, and further distinguished by a rude cross of iron, and occasionally even of silver gilt, on the apex of their thatched conical roofs. A bell is generally placed in a neighboring hut, or rather the substitute for a bell, real ones being seldom met with in the country. This makeshift is a peculiar kind of stone, which, when struck, produces a sound nearly resembling

that of the bell in a small village church in Rutland, of which I remember having heard it said, that, when ringing for church, it had sometimes occurred to strangers visiting the place on a Sunday that the people were a very Sabbath-breaking set, as the blacksmith was working away as usual.

"The interior of an Abyssinian church is divided into three compartments, — a circular wall, concentric with the outer one, dividing the first passage for the laity from the place of the priests, while in the centre of all is a small square, or I believe sometimes circular place, called *Kadasta Kadastan*, or "Holy of Holies." Thus you have the court of the Levites, that of the priests, and the Holy of Holies, exactly after the manner of a Jewish temple. Under the exterior circle are vaults, wherein mostly great men are buried, while the outward face of the wall, which separates the place from that of the priests, is adorned with the rudest possible attempts at painting.

"Figures of the saints, their faces always in full, whatever position their bodies may be in, are daubed in ochre, ruddle, and whiting. St. George, mounted on a very chalky-looking steed, is killing something called a dragon, while, at the same time, his face is turned exactly in an opposite direction to that in which he is pointing his weapon. The Sanctum Sanctorum is the receptacle of the ark, an object of the profoundest veneration, and again of evident Jewish origin. Over this hangs its canopy of silk or chintz, and a vast number of trumphy pieces of similar material hang about in different directions among crosses, books, etc. By right, I believe, no one but priests can enter this holy place; but I have been admitted to it on more than one occasion, partly from being esteemed a *man of letters*, partly because, as a countryman of the pa-

triarchs (all whites are considered Copts), I must be, if possible, better than a priest, as the reputation I enjoyed for morality put the chance of my being unclean out of the question; and doubtless, still more than all, the good monk, who may have been thus unscrupulous in admitting me, had the hopes of filthy lucre as an ease to his conscience.

"This very cleanness or uncleanness is again purely Mosaic. A man who is, for certain reasons, unclean, cannot enter the church till he is purified. Among other causes of uncleanness, to have gone into a room where a child has been recently born, is, as I have already stated, sufficient to render one unclean. To have touched polluted garments is another cause; and many more might be named, but that they are mostly to be found in the book of Jewish law. Circumcision is practised amongst them, and in their matters of eating they follow most strictly the dictates of Moses. Most Abyssinians refuse to eat the flesh of the wild boar, though some partake of it; but the camel is to all an object of horror. Following to the letter the commands of Moses, they refuse to eat animals which do not chew the cud, and those which have not cloven hoofs. Thus the hare is considered as disgusting. The generality of the people, however, do not know whence these rules are derived, but merely believe that such food is not proper, or even wholesome."

The village of the Church in the Rock, as it is called in the native tongue, consists of some fifty small circular huts made of straw and wicker. There is one of larger dimensions — a mansion, in fact, for Abyssinia. This was the dwelling of the chief, or head man, and boasted of several rooms, the interior of which, by the way, with the indoor manners of the people, it will be as well now to describe.

that the reader may understand after what fashion I was lodged when visiting an Abyssinian "swell."

The *arat* is the couch or bed on which all town Abyssinians sleep; that is to say, all those who can afford the luxury. It is a solid framework of wood on four legs; a fresh raw hide is cut into strips, and these are stretched over the frame, in and out, one crossing the other, about an inch or rather more apart; the whole tightens in drying, and forms a rather hard, but agreeable, cool bed. It is the custom always to sleep naked, but covered with the *quarrie*, or cotton cloth worn in the daytime, and the only bedding used is a piece of native tanned leather, so that the air has free access from below. In these hot climates, however, it is more usual to sleep out-of-doors, the *arat* inside the house being used for cold or wet weather only, or for receiving visitors in the daytime. The *midèle*, a sort of fixed couch built of stone and plaster fixed against the wall of an inner chamber, is covered in like manner with a piece of red leather, unless it happens that some wealthy dame has a carpet of Egyptian or Turkish manufacture. The pillows are formed of either a square block of wood, about four inches long by three inches broad, a little hollowed on one side for the head, or very tastefully shaped, the stand being neatly turned like a candlestick bottom. It is about seven or eight inches high, and the part on which the head rests is crescent-shaped. Some of the latter I have seen made of ivory, and stained with henna. This form of pillow is very necessary to people who, from the custom of having their hair fancifully dressed, arranged, and plastered with butter, could not lay their heads on any ordinary one, as they would saturate it with grease, besides seriously disarranging their coiffure; so they use the hollow wooden pillow, just laying their ear

on it, and allowing their hair to hang freely behind. It is rather fatiguing at first to be obliged to keep one's head for a whole night in one position, and that, indeed, not the most comfortable; but habit reconciles one to almost anything. The floor is carpeted with grass, which, in the first instance, is spread nearly half a foot deep all over the room; and afterwards, whenever a visitor comes, a little fresh grass is politely strewed for him to sit on, so that in course of time it accumulates to a considerable quantity. Now this is one of the most disagreeable customs in the country; for, as before and after meals, and on other occasions, the hands of every person in the room are washed by a servant pouring water on them out of a drinking-horn, or any other vessel he may have at hand, you are obliged, from the want of a basin to receive the water, to scratch a small hole in the grass to prevent it splashing you; add to this the beer and other liquids spilt there every day, the manure left by the mule's feet in passing to and from the stable, and the cleaning of the stable itself, which is done two or three times a week for the sake of the mule's feet, which would otherwise become softened by remaining in the wet. This last operation makes a great deal of dirt; for, having no buckets, they carry out the manure and filth in any sort of basket, gourd, or dish they can first lay hands on; dropping, of course, a great deal on the way. This beautiful carpet becomes in time nothing less than a manure heap in a high state of fermentation or putrefaction. Its surface, from the continual supply, keeps an appearance of freshness; but though the eye may be deceived for a time, the nose cannot, and the smell becoming intolerable, the whole is obliged to be cleaned out. For at least a day after this operation the house must be left to ventilate; otherwise no one could

live in it. Dirty as this practice is, we cannot much complain of it in the Abyssinians, as the old English custom of strewing the room with rushes entailed consequences that would probably now-a-days seem quite as disgusting.

Let us take a survey of the kitchen. Imagine a small room, about ten feet long, six broad, and eight high, with or without a window, according to circumstances ; but more usually, as in mine, without one, and at all events without a chimney, so that the smoke, which is always kept going, and that vigorously, finds the door the nearest exit ; and it may be easily conceived that the atmosphere is so dense as to render it difficult for any one but a native to remain long in the room ; even the cook-women, who pass the greater part of the day in this smoke, never think of standing up to do their work, but always remain squatted as low as possible, either near the door or fire. Every article the room contains becomes like the apartment itself, of a pure soot black.

The kitchen utensils are the *magogo* or oven, if it may be so called, a few jars of different forms and sizes, according to the use they are intended to be put to, — some with long necks and narrow mouths, for keeping water in ; others with wide mouths and no necks at all, for holding the liquid dough of which the bread is formed ; and the earthen dishes or saucers in which the meat and other eatables are prepared and served up. The *magogo* is an oblong building, three feet by four, and about a foot high ; it is constructed of clay and small stones, with a place in the interior for a fire ; the whole is covered with a circular slab of a sort of pottery-work, being nearly the same material as that of which the dishes are formed, nicely polished on the upper surface, which is slightly concave in order to receive more easily the liquid dough for the bread.

At the back is a hole by which the smoke may escape, and in front a kind of doorway by which the fire is lighted, and which, being placed exactly opposite the kitchen door, has always a draught of air to keep up a good fire. The cover is made of clay, and is used to keep out the smoke and dirt, and to retain the heat.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WONDERFUL MONKEY.

So many people, — men, women, and children, — had I observed at work in the neighboring fields as we ascended the hill leading to the village, that I was not surprised to find the place deserted. Peter, however, who allowed no such item to enter into his calculations, literally rode in and out the spaces between the huts like a dog at a fair; but finding nothing human, he exclaimed, with a look of disappointment, as we rode near the head man's house :

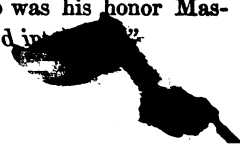
"Shure, your honor, the place has got nobody in it intirely, save a small nigger that was squalling for its mother, I suppose, in that first hut we passed."

"The Aito did not hear a child cry. Mothers in Abyssinia never leave their children at home, but, like those we saw in the fields, strap them upon their backs."

"Faith, Mr. Joas," replied Peter, "it *was* the squeaking of a baby I heard."

"The Aito is mistaken," replied Joas; adding, with a laugh, "my friend mistook the cry of a young monkey for the wail of a child."

"And what's the difference, Mr. Joas?" said Peter, stolidly. "But, lor' bless your innocent heart," he added, "did ye never hear that in our country all babies are young monkeys? I was one once; so was his honor Master Ned, — at least, before we grow'd in."



"I do not understand the Aito!" said Joas, looking strangely puzzled.

"Come, come, Peter, no tricks upon fellow-travellers," I said; adding to Joas, "never mind what he says; he is joking. The term 'young monkey' is only applied to mischievous children in our country."

"Wa!" he exclaimed; then, after a moment's thought, he asked:

"Are, then, the children in your country so very mischievous?"

"By the powers, Mr. Joas, they are as full of tricks as monkeys, and with some of 'em in the streets it's little difference you'd make out between the animals; but then, d'ye see, oldsters don't mind it, for these tricks are only pluck-sprouts; so the more of 'em a youngster shows the better, as he is sure to turn out a brave man."

"Wa!" again exclaimed Joas; "but, Aito, are English children as clever and faithful as monkeys? Monkeys are very clever; they have done great things."

"Whew!" whistled Peter; "it's not me that's poking fun now!" he cried.

"Yes," continued Joas, "I know the history of one monkey who saved a king, a kingdom, a princess, and a great minister from ruin."

"Whose turn is it to cry *wa!* now?" said Peter, imitating Joas's exclamation of surprise. "Look you, friend," he added, rather rudely, "if you give such long pulls at that bow you'll crack it."

"Bow! — I have no bow!"

"Then, to speak plainer, you were throwing the hatchet."

"Hatchet! — I have no hatchet! What means the Aito? I do not understand him!" said Joas.

"He means that you are romancing about that monkey," said I.

"Aito, no," he replied; "I heard the story from a monkey-man in Cairo."

"A man-monkey!" exclaimed Peter, "what sort of beast is that? — do you mean a baboon, or gorilla?"

"No;" was the reply; "I mean a man who gets his livelihood by travelling about exhibiting the cleverness of monkeys. But," he added, "let us dismount and rest ourselves beneath yon tree; and while we are awaiting the head man, who will not be long before he returns with his men from the fields, I will repeat to you the story as it was told me by the monkey-man." Accordingly we dismounted, and, tying the animals together, and leaving them under the charge of Ali, we took our seats beneath the tree, lighted our pipes (here, I may remark, that smoking in hot climates is to Europeans an ingredient of health), and attentively listened to the

STORY OF THE WONDERFUL MONKEY.

"Once upon a time, report saith not how long ago, there lived a proud Sultan, who was renowned over the whole earth for his health, wealth, and wisdom. The Sultan was also very powerful, and, moreover, blessed with a daughter whose transcendant beauties had so dazzled the eyes of all beholders, that one half of his people suffered from the 'winks,' an incurable disease never known in the empire until that pearl of the world, the little princess, first shone down the great public thoroughfare in her perambulator, — a vehicle, by the way, which could never be doubled, since so rare was the princess, and all her belongings, they had been produced in single copies, and the dies broken up. 'Bismillah! God is great, and Mahomet is his prophet! Rare, most rare is this gem of my

house!' the Sultan would exclaim, as he gazed upon his daughter; adding, with a deep sigh, perhaps as he thought of the difficulty of procuring a good husband, 'If Heaven would but afford her a fitting setting, the world would be made happy!' Now, the Grand Vizier, chief minister, had dared to cast the light of his ill-born eyes upon the royal lady. Yes, the mouse, believing itself an eagle, had stared full in the radiant face of the sun of the world; but he paid the penalty. His Vizier's delinquency coming to the royal ear, the minister was cast into one of the deepest dungeons beneath the moat, where, at the opening of this story, he was awaiting the kind offices of the executioner. And this was the black speck in the heaven of the Sultan's happiness and prosperity, for he had long loved the Vizier—at least, enough to make him think twice before cutting off that one head.

"Meditating upon this great state affair, his majesty, one fine morning, sat smoking his pipe at the private window which overlooked the great square before his palace. Suddenly the royal cogitations were disturbed by the coming into the square, and just beneath the royal window, of two persons—at least, a monkey and his master. Fatigued by his day's work, the man squatted before the royal orbs, and having lighted a fire, prepared food wherewith to refresh himself; but while the meat was boiling, the bells of a neighboring mosque summoned the people to prayer; and like a good Mussulman, the monkey-man arose to perform his ablutions before prayer. Before leaving, he consigned the cookery to the care of the monkey, particularly cautioning the animal to see that the meat was not overdone, and that the water did not boil over. On the instant of his master's leaving, the monkey's duties commenced. True, the employment was

not very active, and the animal could, all in good faith, amuse himself and keep an eye upon the pot at the same time. Thus, for his own delectation, as also unwittingly for that of the royal watcher, he scratched the back of his head, ran two or three heats after his tail, and picked up bits of red hot embers. Finding they burned him, he threw them away, and to cool his fingers thrust them into the boiling water! Now, of course, so wise a king laughed heartily at so foolish a trick as the latter, even in a monkey. The monkey, however, knew his own business best, as we shall see. He had really been tempering and training his fingers for the better performance of his duties. Had he not been commanded to see that the fowl was not overdone? How then could he obey without tasting it? Even the king declared by the beard of the Prophet that the animal was not only obedient, but wise, as from time to time it lifted the fowl from the pot and took a bite. But, unfortunately, it is not impossible to have too much of a good thing. The monkey was over zealous; so, by frequent tasting, about the same time that the fowl was done, it had become eaten also.

"'Bismillah!' cried his majesty, laughing till the tears ran from his eyes one over the other, like marbles playing at leap-frog, 'the poor animal is in a worse fix than my Vizier; they have both fallen into roguery without meaning it!'

"The monkey, however, did not discover the extent to which his zeal had led him, until, searching the pot for another leg, wing, or piece of breast, he found nothing but bones and broth. But then his conscience attacked him. Conjuring up in his mind the rage and disappointment of his hard-working, over-fatigued, pious, but very hungry *master*, on his return, the animal moaned, chattered,

scratched his sides, first with one hand and then the other, and rubbed his fingers on the ground; but at length recovering his presence of mind, like a wise monkey as he was, he squatted down upon the ground, and, holding his head between his hands, and tickling his brains from without with his fingers, began seriously to reflect how he might get out of the scrape. Now, monkeys have their strokes of luck as well as other people. Thus, just at the nick of time, a number of kites came flying about over him. Looking at the birds with longing eyes, he said to himself, 'I must have one of you.' And as he said these words, a scheme to catch it entered his head. Now, nature has provided these animals with two pink pads behind, on which to seat themselves; and it occurred to the monkey that their resemblance to raw meat might assist him in entrapping one of the hungry birds. So, having rolled himself in the dust and ashes till his fur was quite white, he put himself in the posture which a little boy would take just before turning a summersault — that is, with his head on the ground; and in this position he looked exactly like a heap of dust, with a lump of raw meat at the top of it. Two or three kites soon approached, curling round and round, till at last one, bolder than the others, pounced at the supposed meat, and was immediately seized by the delighted monkey by its wing; and, notwithstanding all its struggles, pecks, and scratches, was poked alive, feathers and all, into the boiling broth!

"'God is great, wonderful!'" exclaimed the thoughtful Sultan; 'the beast is a genius in policy. He is fit to replace my Vizier. It shall be done. I have said it. He shall marry my daughter!'"

"The ould baste!" interposed Peter, angrily; "Sultan

or no Sultan, I'd liked to have treated him to six dozen with the gun-sling!"

Not noticing this interruption, Joas continued:

"'And by the beard of the Prophet, Aito,' said the monkey-man, 'the Sultan kept his word.'"

"Mark time! halt! Mr. Joas," cried the excited Peter. "That man-monkey, monkey-man, or whatever you call him, threw the hatchet too far. I don't believe it; it wasn't natural. He was a —"

"Hush! silence, Peter!" I cried.

"Silence it is, your honor; but," he added to Joas, "before I bring my tongue to a dead halt, you don't mean to tell me, Mr. Joas, that the Sultan, haythen tho' he was, married the colleen to that thieving, poaching, glutton of a monkey, and made him prime minister into the bargain? Only to think now of her Majesty Queen Victoria, God bless her, having one of Mr. Du Chaillu's gorillas for a prime minister instead of great old Pam!"

Having listened patiently to this outburst, Joas continued:

"No, the monkey was already married, and had a family, consisting of Madame, two grown-up sons, and a daughter, besides a small one in the cradle. No, the Sultan pardoned his Vizier, and buying the monkey of the man, his master, he presented it and its belongings to the minister, as an example of a faithful servant, who would resort to any expedient rather than betray his trust; and so well did the Vizier profit by the example set him by the monkey, that within a year the delighted monarch married him to the princess, and they all lived happily ever after."

"What, monkey and all?" asked Peter.

"Yes, he lived at court with Madame and her family,

including the small one in arms, upon a pension granted to them by the Padisha."

"Bravo, Joas!" you have timed the telling of your story to a second. See! here comes the head man of this family." And as I spoke, an elderly man, followed by four others carrying agricultural implements, came towards us. I arose to speak to him, but, merely making a bow, he passed us, and, followed by his sons, entered his house.

"Ugh! the oncivil bear!" cried Peter; "seeing we are travellers in this haythen country of his, he might have asked us to take bit and sup with him, and felt honored into the bargain."

"Silence, Peter! Neither by word nor look give offence to these villagers, or you will get into hot water."

"Faith, then, your honor, it's just the hot water with, a trifle of whiskey in it, I'm wanting."

"Have patience man, and you will get something more than whiskey."

"Maybe it's a headache your honor means; and faith it isn't unlikely, seeing it must be *queer* stuff that's made in such a *queer* country."

"The head man and his family have gone in to change their attire; it would not be respectful to welcome strangers in their working-dress," said Joas.

"Then the ould gentleman's a deal civiler than he looks, and I'd advise him to go to law with his phiz for libel," said Peter.

But Joas proved right.

Immediately after the party had entered the house, we could hear the noise and bustle as if of preparation; then, in about ten minutes, one of the young men came out with a large bowl of new milk, which he respectfully presented to us by turns. Peter was the last to take a long draught,

after which, giving the bowl to the man, he said, "Thankee, my lad, you're a gintleman, every inch of ye; and barring the want of the drop of whiskey in it, it's a deal fresher I feel after it."

A few minutes after, the old gentleman, now attired in a clean white garment with a crimson border, came out of the house, and politely ushered us into his dwelling. Having given me, as the chief of my party, the only couch, he placed before us a plentiful supply of provisions—I had but little doubt the supper he had provided for himself and family. He also gave us bowls of milk and corn for the animals, and, lastly, provided us with a large hut next to his own; topping his hospitality by an apology for the scantiness of our fare, which "would have been far more worthy of such an illustrious stranger had he not been visited by the tax-gatherers a few days before."

Now, tax-gatherers have in all parts of the world, and from all time, been regarded as pests of society. Europeans, however, or at least Englishmen, will become reconciled to their own system after reading the following story of how Oubi, Prince of Tigré, levied his celebrated *teskar*.

"At the last great levy of taxes, called 'Oubi's Teskar,' the greater part of the people had run away from their villages. In such cases, the *chiekka*, or petty chiefs of villages, become responsible for the payment of the whole sum due by the fugitives. Our good landlord, Temmenou, was thus rendered liable for sixteen *tehan* or *intalams* of corn, each of eight *madigas*; this, if measured with the ordinary measure, might be worth, at the time, about sixty dollars; but on this occasion a measure more than double the size was used; nay, I believe, even invented for the purpose.

"Sixty dollars (or £12) is a large sum for an Abyssin-

ian farmer; but double that amount almost reduced our poor friend to bankruptcy. He was obliged to sell his horse, mule, and several plough-oxen to meet the demands; and even now part is unpaid, and he is living in perpetual fear of a visit from the soldiers of Oubi.

"The Abyssinians have no sheriffs' officers, sponging-houses, queen's benches, or courts through which insolvent debtors may pass and get 'whitewashed.' When a man owes money to the government, a band of soldiers are sent to feed on him till he pays what is due. They treat him brutally, as a matter of course, and oblige him to provide them with the most expensive luxuries, such as butter, honey (of which they make mead), the finest bread, when probably none is to be met with in the neighborhood, and all these in ridiculously large quantities, wasting what they cannot consume. This treatment, of course, in no way tends to assist the man in collecting money to pay his debt; thus, if he cannot borrow, he is generally reduced to utter ruin, and then who knows or cares what may become of him?

"They have a plan of extortion rather ingenious, but horribly cruel. The debtor is put in prison, and chained by the arm; the iron which is placed round his wrist is not clasped, but is merely a strong hoop, opened by force, to allow the hand to enter, and then hammered tight between two stones. At first it is only made tight enough to prevent any possibility of the prisoner's escape. After some time, however, if the sum required be not forthcoming, it is knocked a little tighter, and so by degrees till the hand dies, the nails drop out, and the poor prisoner is at best maimed for life. Death sometimes ensues from this treatment, as in the following case:

"When an Englishman named Coffin got into ill-favor

with Oubi, and thought himself safer at the coast than in his power, his son John was taken and put on a mountain, with the iron on his hand as I have described. He remained tortured for some time, losing first his hand, then his eyesight, and at last he died from this treatment."

CHAPTER XV.

ABYSSINIAN MERRY-MAKINGS.

EARLY the next morning, Joas, Peter, and I "tubbed," as we call taking a morning bath in the army, in a small limpid stream just outside the village; but wishing to be alone for half an hour, in order to pen some of the notes from which I am writing this narrative, I left my companions in the water. Reëntering the village, I suddenly fell in with a dozen Abyssinian girls, who were returning from a celebrated well, carrying jars, or gourds, of water, and singing sentimental love-songs. Seeing me, however, and probably for the first time a white man, they stopped, put down their vessels, and laughed and danced with delight. One of them, the critic probably of the "set," in answer to some of her companions' queries as to what I could be compared, gave it as her opinion that I was a good-looking Abyssinian from some distant province, with my skin off; while the others, encouraged by her example, offered some other pleasantries, one of which was nick-naming me, though for what reason I know not, "cat's eyes."

Now, you know it is not agreeable to be bantered, or, what is more vulgarly termed, *chaffed*, even by a bevy of wild beauties; so I was not a little pleased when one of the head man's servants happening to come up, bade them go about their business, and further, offered to act as my body-guard homewards, an offer I accepted, not, as you may

imagine, out of fear of the wild girls, but to obtain some information respecting a quaint-looking structure I had noticed near the head man's house.

It was a *dass*; that is, a bower made of a framework of stakes, the uprights being fixed in the ground; stakes were fastened to them horizontally by ligaments of bark, the whole being covered with green branches, and decorated with flowers, and forming not only a pleasant but a very pretty retreat from the sun. The reason of its erection I discovered was a marriage that was to take place on the morrow. An Abyssinian wedding! Well, delighted at the opportunity of witnessing such a novelty, I resolved to remain in the village until it was over.

I had entered my notes and closed my book when Joas and Peter entered the hut; the latter saying:

"Shure, thin, Master Ned, the ould boy's a gentleman, every inch of him; and it's my belief some of his family came from the ould country. His mother, maybe, was an Irishman!"

"What nonsense is this?" I said, a little vexed at his levity; "of whom do you speak?"

"Faith, thin, your honor, it isn't nonsense at all; but a good breakfast I am speaking about; for at this very moment that fine old nigger gentleman, the head man, is waiting without to take you to his house."

"Nonsense! or, if it be so, why does he not come in? — the door is open."

"Aito," said Joas, "you have a word adopted by your countrymen called *etiquette*. Abyssinian gentlemen have also their *etiquette*, although they never heard the word. The head man will not enter the dwelling of a distinguished stranger — for such he considers you — without *permission*."

"Oh! that is it," said I, jumping to my feet; "very well, then, since the mountain wont come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain."

Accordingly I, accompanied by Joas and Peter, went outside the hut, where I found our hospitable friend squatting upon the ground. Seeing me, he arose and begged that I and my people would follow him to his dwelling, and there take our morning meal. Of course I accepted the invitation. Just, however, as we were entering his hut, a handsome lad of twelve years of age approached the head man, and, having first made a respectful obeisance, begged that he would accept the carcass of a goat, a jar of honey, and a large lump of butter, all of which were in the hands of two men who stood behind him. The old gentleman having graciously complied, the men deposited the presents at the door of the house, and the lad took, as we *thought*, his departure.

"By the piper who played before Moses, but it's a generous people they are in this part of the world!" cried Peter.

"The boy," said Joas, by way of explanation, "is betrothed to one of the head man's daughters; the marriage day is at hand, and these are propitiatory presents."

"*That* little chap going to be married!" exclaimed Peter. "It's joking you are! Shure, it can't be long since he left his cradle!"

"My country people marry very young," replied Joas, quietly; "girls between eight and nine, boys between eleven and twelve."

"Faith, then, Mr. Joas, ye beat the Yankees themselves in going ahead," replied Peter.

The head man, having ushered us into the eating apartment, we sat down to a hearty breakfast, which, by the

way, we enjoyed none the less by its being interrupted for a time, by a comic incident. Among those present were the head man's wife and daughter, a pretty little girl about eight or nine years of age. This young lady was seated near a kind of screen which ran across that portion of the room, and was busily engaged talking to her mamma, when, turning her head towards the screen, she gave a loud shrill scream, placed her hands before her face, and darted into an obscure corner.

"Poor child, she's scalded herself with the hot milk! See, she's upset the bowl!" cried Peter, getting up and running after her. Further, he took her up in his lap and began to soothe her; but the young lady very savagely began to plough his face with her finger-nails; so he dropped her as quickly as if she had been a hot coal, with "Get away with ye, ye little wildcat!"

But while this was going on in one corner of the room, we saw the cause of the young lady's ire. The screen had been pulled aside, and amid much bad language, buffeting, and kicking, of which the lady of the house had her full share, the youth, he who had brought the presents, darted forth from the hut. The explanation of the scene is as follows:

This lad was betrothed to the young lady, our host's daughter; indeed, they were to be married the next day. Now the term of betrothal generally lasts three months, during which time the bridegroom frequently visits his father-in-law elect with presents; but he is never permitted to see his intended wife, even for a moment, *unless*, by urgent entreaty, or a handsome bribe, he induces a friend or servant of the bride to procure him a sight of her face. We have seen after what manner this lad succeeded. The bride, discovering the trick, acted to the

very letter her portion of the customary etiquette on such occasions, by affecting to fall into a violent passion ; being, as the play-bills have it, supported by the whole strength of the company. It was, however, but as a passing cloud ; for no sooner had the presumptuous, ill-bred bridegroom quitted the house, than the family, one and all, gave vent to a burst of laughter and merriment—in which, by the way, Peter took no part ; but passing his hand down his smarting and bleeding face, merely observed :

“ Bedad, it’s to be hoped that a part of the wedding ceremony is cutting the bride’s claws ! ”

“ The punishment was well merited, Peter. How could you so insult the dignity of a lady on the eve of being married, as to take her up in your arms as if she had been a child ? ”

“ It’s an ungrateful little baggage ; for wasn’t I frightened out of my seven senses thinking she was scalded ? ”

“ But you treated her as a child, Peter. ”

“ And isn’t she a child, Master Ned, barring that instead of imitating the tricks of the monkey, she’s taken to the bad manners of the hyena ? ”

“ Well, well, Peter, as you will, ” said I. “ But let us now prepare to continue our journey ; ” and we arose to take our departure ; but the head man held my hand so warmly, and begged so hard that I would honor the wedding festivities of his daughter with my presence, that I consented to defer my journey for a day or two, very much to Peter’s vexation, who, with a want of gallantry astounding in a soldier, declared he had seen enough of the little

Now, as the wedding was to take place on the following day, and according to Abyssinian etiquette the guests invited to the festivities arrived the day previously, that af-

ternoon the village became crowded with people. Among the arrivals were the musicians, whose instruments, by the way, are thus interestingly described by Mr. Parkyns :

"The musical instruments of Abyssinia are not of much variety nor of great compass. The *negarits*, or big drums, are used only by great chieftains of the highest rank. In Tigré, certain provinces give a right to the use of the *negari* to the chief who governs them. Oubi uses forty-four, each of his sons thirty-two, other chieftains sixteen or twenty. Minor governments use the *ambilta*, and *cundan melakhat*, and others the latter only. The *ambilta* are a set of five or six pipes, or fifes, blown like Pan pipes, except that each performer blows one only, every pipe having a different note, depending on the length or thickness of the instrument.

"They are played in turns, like the Russian Lornband, and produce a tune more or less resembling the chimes of village church-bells, prettily executed. They are made of the *shamboko*, a kind of hollow reed, or bamboo. The *cundan melakhat* consists of four long tubes, made of cane, hollowed, with a bell mouth, and reed mouthpiece like a clarinet. Their note is harsh and disagreeable, and they are played in turns like the *ambilta*, always accompanied by a small drum. The instrument most commonly used by the people of the country to give time to their dancing, or as an accompaniment to their songs, is the *cobero*, which is a small drum, very similar to the Egyptian *darabouka*, and, like it, is beaten with the hands. Two or three of them are frequently played together.

"This instrument, it appears, is used by nearly all the nations of this part of Africa ; but every country, and even tribe, has its peculiar way of striking it. They have also a *sort of flute*, which is blown from the thick end, and has four

holes; and a kind of guitar, or lyre, which they play as the Turks and Arabs do theirs — a bit of wood or horn, held in the right hand, being struck backwards and forwards across the strings, while, with the fingers of the left hand, they are touched guitar-fashion, so as to produce the tune. The *cobero* is suspended by a strap to the shoulder of the player, who, standing up, marks the time by swinging his body to and fro with more or less grace, while the spectators stand in a ring, taking it in turns to dance.

“The commonest dance of Tigré is a sort of *chassés* in a circle; they keep time to the music by shrugging their shoulders, and working their elbows backwards and forwards. At certain parts of the dance they all squat down at once, shrugging away more furiously than before. At times, also, some clever dancer or *danseuse* will execute a *pas seul*, or a *pas de deux* will be performed by two entering the circle together, and throwing themselves backwards and forwards, and squatting, varied by other equally elegant attitudes; while the shrugging is never omitted. Some of the bystanders keep time by clapping their hands and singing; and the girls in the outer circle, crossing their arms over each other's shoulders, sway their bodies in a *really* very graceful manner.”

Thus the musicians. The most important among the arrivals, however, was that of the eight *arkees* or bridesmen. These *arkees* are chosen among themselves when boys. They agree, when playmates together, that when either of them marries, they shall reciprocally act as bridesmen to each other. Their duties are, however, far different from those required of bridesmen in England, and sufficiently curious and interesting to merit a separate description.

A few days after the wedding, the bridesmen, dressing themselves up in all the ornaments they can collect, take a *cobero*, or small drum, and go singing and dancing before every house in the neighborhood. If in the vicinity of a large town, where there are many visits to make, their peregrinations occupy several days, or even a week or more. Every person visited is expected to offer a present, according to his circumstances; if, however, any one should be stingily disposed, or by ill luck not at home, they forcibly enter the house, and purloin anything they can lay hands on, such as sheep, goats, or fowls, which may be straying about the yards; even in the public market-places and streets they perpetrate the most audacious robberies.

Two of them, disguised, will approach the wares of some seller, while a third, profiting by the concealment afforded by the long garments which they purposely leave trailing on the ground, squats behind them. By pretending to bargain for some article or other, they generally succeed in drawing off the attention of the vender from his property, who, being seated, naturally raises his eyes while talking to them; and their crouching confederate, watching his opportunity, purloins from beneath whatever he can lay hold of, and then makes quietly off; nor do they scruple most cruelly to victimize even very poor people.

Concealed in some nook or corner of one of the most frequented alleys leading to the market, they quietly watch till some country-girl passes on her way thither, bearing on her head or shoulder it may be a piece of cotton cloth, the produce of some months' industry, when they suddenly spring out and snatch it from her from behind, and dodging round a corner, run off as fast as their legs will carry them. *In the absence of any other notification of it, you may always know when any great wedding has recently taken*

place by the lamentations of the women, who run about the streets, proclaiming, to the great amusement of the bystanders, how they have been treated. No one attempts forcibly to recover any article stolen from him, as such conduct would be in direct violation of the privileges of the *arkees*, who, if questioned concerning a theft which they may have perpetrated, do not scruple to assert their innocence with the most solemn oaths. I was once with some *arkees*, whom I had seen kill and conceal a sheep, at the same time boasting how and from whom they had stolen it. On discovering the theft, the proprietor immediately guessed who were the robbers; but on his coming to them to inquire, they positively denied the fact, appealing to St. Michael as witness of their innocence; and on being further pressed, each of them took in his hand the *mateb*, or blue cord, which he wore round his neck as a sign of Christianity, adding, "as my future abode in heaven," condemning himself to the other place should he lie.

"If any one but an *arkee* should thus perjure himself, he would not only be considered a wretch unfit to associate with, but be liable to punishment for his crime. The bridesmen are, however, privileged persons, and when in office they may do anything without risking either their skins or their reputation. Notwithstanding, if a man miss anything, he has only to offer a small present as a ransom, and they are obliged in honor to restore the stolen property, whatever it may be; but to obviate this restitution, when any eatable live stock is stolen, it is immediately slaughtered and devoured, and the poor man goes back empty-handed. The whole of the profits of their begging visits and thefts are collected and handed over to the bridegroom, to compensate in some measure for the ex-

pense he is put to in supplying them with plenty of food and drink for three or four weeks, during which time they remain in the house, taking it by turns to watch, some of them always being near the bride, whom they endeavor to amuse and divert in every possible way, in order that she may not regret too much the temporary separation from her family."





C. P. NICHOLLS

A GREAT BROUNDE FEAST.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GREAT BROUNDE FEAST.

A WEDDING* in the family of an Abyssinian chief, albeit he be only a little one, is ever the occasion for the display of a profuse hospitality. Early in the morning, rich and poor, men, women, and children from the surrounding neighborhood, began to pour into the village. Indeed, by midday, the time named for the feast, it had become so densely crowded that Peter and I (Joas remained in the hut for fear of being recognized by one of the numerous new-comers) had literally to fight our way through the crowd, who were witnessing, with watering mouths and longing eyes, the killing of the cattle for the *brounde* feast.

"Ugh! it's a nasty sight; and that fellow there, for all his piety, looks more like a demon than an angel!" said Peter.

"The slaughter of animals is regarded by the Abyssinians, as with the Mahometans, as a religious ceremony. Indeed, they will partake neither of bird, beast, nor fish whose death-wound has not been accompanied by the words, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

The butcher before us having pronounced this formula, given the death-wound with his long knife, and further satisfied the Mosaical law, according to his lights, by pouring six or seven drops of blood upon the ground, two assistants ran forward and fell to work on the back of the

head. On each side of the spine they cut skin deep ; then, putting their fingers between the flesh and the skin, they began to strip the hide half way down the ribs, and soon to the buttock, cutting the skin wherever it hindered them easily to strip the animal bare. You must bear in mind that all this time the poor animal was only moribund, not dead. Its roars and groans were fearful.

"Come, Peter," said I, sick at heart, "let us force our way out of this ! It is too horrible !"

"Stay, Master Ned ! See ! By the powers, the cannibals *are* going to eat the animals alive and uncooked !" and as Peter spoke, the butcher cut large square slices from the buttocks, and tossed them to the poorer visitors, who, greedily snatching the pieces, crammed them in their mouths, and began the gormandizing of the day. This cow, the first slain, was given to the poor. I need not tell my reader that we did not remain to see the others slaughtered.

On ordinary occasions when a cow is killed on the establishment of an Abyssinian prince, each separate part, or portion of the beast, is devoted to a separately privileged stomach, that is, belonging to a member of the household. For instance, the gunners on guard have the *frimbia*, or strip down the chest ; the royal washerman has the *tooneha*, or second joint of one arm, while the *gasha-jagry* or shield-bearer, has the similar joint of the other ; the wood-carriers have the privilege of killing and skinning the animals, and their perquisite consists in the right of cutting a small piece off each division of the meat ; two thirds of the thus-collected morsels belong to them, and the remaining third to the beaters of the *negarits* or big drums.

The neck, paunch, and liver belong to the grass-cutters ;

the thigh bones, with the meat remaining on them, to the *gombaynia*, or women who carry the *gombos*, or jars of mead, for their master's use when on a journey; the porters, who carry the chiefs on like occasions, take the *talma*, or fat membrane of the belly, and a bone with a little bit of meat from the shoulder. The tongue and cheek are preserved for great men; the *ambiltania*, or fifers, have, like the drummers, a small piece off each portion of the meat; the *azmary*, or buffoon, claims the gristle from the *frimbia*. The scribe, who writes the accounts of the food, has for his allowance a small piece of meat from the shoulder, near the *shint*; the cooks have the *shimfilla*, a part near the tripe; the ribs are eaten *tibsy*, or broiled on the embers of a wood fire. The hump is another privilege of great men only, and the most renowned warrior amongst them has the first cut at it. They frequently keep up a friendly controversy for a long time before any one can be persuaded to put a knife into it, each politely offering to his neighbor the post of honor.

But to return to the particular feast to which we had been invited. Having fought our way through the mob to the *dass* or bower erected for the ceremony, we found it had been strewn with a layer of freshly cut grass; some fifty guests seated at tables of different heights and sizes, the largest being occupied by the master. Now, would my reader fully understand the pleasures of a dinner, out for the first time in Abyssinia, let him give the following description a careful perusal.

The tables were strewn with wheaten cakes of different qualities, the finest being on that of the master and his chief guests. These serve the three purposes of table-cloth, serviette, and food. While awaiting the coming of the viands there was much laughing and talking; but sud-

denly, at a signal from the master, several waiters ran in, holding huge lumps of raw beef, reeking with blood and smoking, because killed within the half hour. I said the waiters ran; they did more,—they exhibited a frantic haste to serve the company, each of whom, as the mess approached, with one hand snatched up the nearest piece of beef, and with a crooked but sharp sword in the other, began to hack off pieces and cram them into their mouths with the most savage gluttony. Not a word was now spoken; indeed, he must have possessed a peculiar gift who could have uttered a syllable; nor for one long hour did they stop. The exact mode of eating is as follows: Having cut off his strip or lump of meat, the diner dips one end in liquid, then seizing it between his teeth, while he holds the other end in his left hand, he cuts a bit off close to his lips by an upward stroke of his sword, only just avoiding the tip of his nose, and so on till he has finished the whole piece; and after this fashion one neighbor of mine made what was considered, even by his friends, to be a tolerably fair meal, namely, about ten pounds of *brounde*, or raw meat, seven cakes, and twenty-six pints of beer. Add to the foregoing that the louder the noise made by the diner by means of his lips during the meal the higher is considered his breeding, and you will have no bad notion of the comfort of the entertainment.

Now, disgusting as my reader may think the practice of eating raw meat, Bruce evidently thought otherwise, and gives us the following very interesting dissertation upon it:

“It must,” says that traveller, “be from prejudice alone we condemn the eating of raw flesh; no precept, divine or human, forbids it; and if it be true, as later travellers have discovered, that there are nations ignorant of the use

of fire, any law against eating raw flesh could never have been intended by God as obligatory upon mankind in general. At any rate, it is certainly not clearly known, whether the eating raw flesh was not an earlier and more general practice than by preparing it with fire; many wise and learned men have doubted whether it was at first permitted to man to eat animal food at all. God, the author of life, and the best judge of what was proper to maintain it, gave this regimen to our first parents: 'Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat;' and though, immediately after, he mentions both beasts and fowls, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth, he does not say that he has designed any of these as meat for man. On the contrary, he seems to have intended the vegetable creation as food for both man and beast. 'And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is life*, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so.' After the flood, when mankind began to repossess the earth, God gave Noah a much more extensive permission: 'Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.' Saul's army, after a battle, *slew*, that is, fell voraciously upon, the cattle they had taken, and threw them upon the ground to cut off their flesh, and eat them raw, so that the army was defiled by eating blood, or living animals. To prevent this, Saul caused to be rolled to him a great stone, and ordered those that killed their oxen to cut their throats upon that stone. This was the only lawful way of killing animals for food; the tying of the ox and throwing it upon the ground was

not permitted as equivalent. The Israelites did probably in that case, as the Abyssinians do at this day, — they cut a part of the throat, so that blood might be seen upon the ground, but nothing mortal to the animal followed from that wound ; but, after laying the head upon a large stone and cutting its throat, the blood fell from on high, or was poured on the ground like water, and sufficient evidence appeared that the creature was dead, before it was attempted to eat it. The Abyssinians came from Palestine a very few years after this, and there is no doubt that they then carried with them this, with many other Jewish customs, which they have continued to this day.”

But the reader asks whether I partook of this *brounde*, or raw beef? No ; but I tasted the *tibsy*, or broiled meat, which was brought in shortly after the *brounde*. It consists of the rib bones, with the meat cut in strips ; but like the *brounde* it is presented by the servants to the guests, each of whom, taking the measure of his appetite with his eye, cuts off what he desires, and so it is passed round.

As for Peter, who would not touch the meat, he was nearly choked by the cramming politeness of our host and one of his sons, between whom he sat, each of whom would, every now and then, thrust a hot peppered cake into his mouth, forcing it down by another and another, till the tears started from his eyes, and the skin of his mouth, lips, and throat, had become terribly scarified by the pepper ; for, upon the Abernethian principle, an Abyssinian never drinks until he has done eating, and it would be thought very rude of a stranger to do so.

I must chronicle one accident of a dangerous, although ludicrous nature, that happened to Peter. He had been suffering some little time from the cakes being thrust into *his mouth*, after the manner related. Watching him, I

saw that every now and then he would wince, and, apparently giving a kick beneath the table, mutter, "Get out wid ye!" or, perhaps, shake his head, or wriggle on his seat uneasily, as a cow in the fields when tormented by insects, which she tries in vain to flap away with her tail. But suddenly he took the last cake that had been crammed into his mouth, dropped it upon the floor, and with a start, as if he had been stung by a scorpion, he jumped up from his seat, sending the table over.

"Hilloa, Peter! What the deuce is the matter?" I asked.

"The matter, your honor!" he replied, as he stooped down and rubbed the calf of his leg; "you had better ask the varmint under the table! Bedad, as if it wasn't enough for the *big* devils to cram a Christian like a goose, the *little* devils have been imitating their parents by cutting pieces of raw beef out of me calves!"

The following will explain this incident:

At these entertainments the boys of the house or village, who have the right of *entrée*, get under the tables, and, lying upon the filth on the ground, alternately caress or pinch the feet and legs of the visitors, by way of hint that a piece of *brounde* or a cake dropped by accident will prove acceptable. Now, as Peter did not know of this invariably winked-at practice, he had submitted to minor scratches and pinches, until one of the boys, growing impatient, or wishing literally to make some impression upon his understandings, had bitten a piece, perhaps the smallest of pieces, out of one of his legs.

"Never mind, Peter," I said; "the urchin made a mistake!"

"Bedad, he did! just one animal for another — calf for cow!" replied Peter, restored to good humor. The boy,

however, was sent away to be whipped, and the incident was forgotten as soon as the great jar of mead, or beer, was brought in.

"This jar," says Mr. Parkyns, "is sometimes so large that one man cannot possibly carry it. Its mouth is covered with a piece of rag, drawn tight over it as a strainer, to prevent the bits of wax, bark, and other extraneous matters from falling into the drinking-vessels when the mead is poured out. These vessels are the *wancha*, or horns (commonly used in the country, but more often for beer than mead), common tumblers, and a sort of bottle from Venice, called *brillé*. The office of pouring out the mead devolves on one of the *logonamy*, who brings in the jar. He supports it under his arm, raising and lowering it to fill the *wancha*, which is held by another servant, called the *fellaky*, who keeps tapping or scratching the rag with his fingers, to facilitate a free flow of the liquor. Under the mouth of the jar is a bowl to catch the droppings, which are the perquisites of the *fellaky*. It is easy for this functionary to appropriate to himself one glass out of every five or six, if he knows how to arrange matters with the *logonamy*, who holds the jar, so that he may keep pouring on a little after each vessel is filled. Besides this, he has the right of emptying into his reservoir about one inch of the liquor from every *wancha* filled (which is a great deal, as they are very broad at the mouth, and narrow downwards), and from every *brillé*, or bottle, two inches.

"The first horn poured out is drunk by the *logonamy*, who holds the jar, and the second by the *tedge melkernia*, who has the superintendence of the brewery; the *fellaky* then arranges the horns on the ground near him as fast as they are filled, and the *asalafy*, or waiter, takes them up,

drinks one himself, then presents one to the master of the house, and afterwards hands them round to the company. Before offering a glass to any one, the waiter pours a little of the contents into his left hand and drinks it off; this, with all the former tasting by the brewer, grass-cutter, etc., is to show that the mead is not poisoned. Ordinary persons drink about two thirds, the remainder being the perquisite of the waiter, who, as soon as the glass is returned, drinks off the contents. He would not, however, presume to put his master's cup to his lips, but, raising it above his head, pours the contents into his mouth from a distance. This feat is rather difficult to perform; for if he has not the knack of letting the mead flow straight down his throat without attempting to swallow it, he must choke; and if he has not the dexterity to give a right direction to the stream, it will probably be spilt down his neck.

"If it be a *wancha*, it is still more difficult to manage, on account of the depth of its mouth. Persons anxious to show favor to any particular servant will pour mead into his two hands, which he holds like a trough to his mouth, whence he imbibes it; but should the master be a martinet, the servant would not venture to exhibit any such feats before him, but would pour the liquor into some other vessel before drinking it. It may readily be imagined that, at a large party, all these tops and bottoms of glasses would form together a considerable quantity, and that the *asalafy* would have as much as he could do to carry himself, to say nothing of the glasses, were he to drink all that falls to his share; so he either distributes it among his fellow-servants, or collects it in a bowl for a great tipple with his friends in the evening."

As I have told you, not a word was spoken during the eating. The copious draughts of mead, however, let loose

the company's tongues, and so fast, and at such random did they now run, I may say that they had all run into one; producing a din that might have been heard a mile away, their voices being as loud as their appetites were strong. So copiously, however, did they drink, that, in a very short time, what with their feeding and libations, the great din must have subsided into a blended, and, certainly, not very harmonious snoring. But suddenly there came a flourish of musical instruments, and the guests arose to their feet, shouting:

"THE BRIDE IS COMING!"

"Och, bad luck to it!" cried Peter, who was now enjoying himself; "the beer is the only part of the '*could colation*,' as the papers at home would call it, fit for a Christian. Why didn't she come at the other end of it, when the savage gentlemen were making such bastes and cannibals of themselves?"

"Clear the *dass*!" shouted, in a stentorian voice, the "full-dressed," that is, less than half-nude gentleman usher; and at once, *sans ceremonie*, the men with the wands began to make such good use of them that in a few minutes all of those not being either members of the family, of sufficient rank, or like Peter and I regarded as illustrious strangers, departed at once, like Macbeth's guests, without "standing on the order of their going."

"Mighty queer treatment, too, to be fed like pigs, and then turned out neck and crop without a decent warning!" observed Peter, himself in better humor now he found that he was considered one of the inner circle, and, moreover, should have ample time to finish his beer.

"Hush, Peter!" said J., fearing the host or his sons

might guess by his gestures that he was speaking derogatory of them; "it is the custom of the country."

"Is it, Master Ned? then, I take it, it's a custom, as Hamlet says in the play, 'that's better honored in the breach than in the muzzle!'"

"'Observance,' Peter!" I said, correcting the last word.

"Ay, ay, your honor! 'observance' it may be, at least to civilians; but to my thinking, muzzle's the word — it is more military. Faith," he added, with a laugh, as at that moment the bridal procession entered the *dass*, headed by one of the head man's sons carrying his sister the bride upon his shoulders in a very undignified position, "it's a sack of coal or potatoes the man's thinking he's bringing home to the ould people!"

The bride was accompanied by several persons holding lighted tapers, and a body of women shouting good wishes at the very top of their voices. The happy little lady was then led around to each person to receive the benediction of the whole party. Following their example, Peter and I placed our hands upon her head; but gladly enough removed them, for the rich black hair was literally lying in a bath of fresh butter, with which it had been dressed.

"At all events," muttered Peter, shaking his hands, "it's a good beginning of the world; for if her bread isn't buttered on both sides, her head is! Mayhap it's to make her brains go a little easier than her temper, the small cat!" and he lifted his hand to his scratched face.

The benedictions over, the relations of the bride elect began the dance, after the fashion described in the last chapter. We — that is, Peter and I — stood looking on; but my companion becoming excited, involuntarily commenced imitating the grotesque figures.

"Be quiet, Peter! you are worse than a monkey! You will offend the good people," said I.

"Bedad, with your honor's permission, I'll trate meself to a jig with them!" he replied. As luck would have it, at that very moment, an ancient lady, the grandmother of the bride — who, by way of distinction, wore upon her head a straw dish-cover — seized with a similar impulse, perhaps aroused to action by reminiscences of her own marriage, began to caper about the place, occasionally taking the dish-cover in her hand, and twisting and twirling it about upon her finger like a London street conjurer.

This was too much for my servant's sense of the ridiculous.

"By the powers, the ould *antiquity's* the very thing for a partner!" cried he; and darting forward, by gestures he made known his desire to join her in the "light fantastic."

She, nothing loth to be so noticed by a white man, — the oldest woman, despite the many pretty girls in the room, — signified her willingness, and a dance commenced of the most ludicrous description, truly beyond the powers of pen and ink to describe; but to the uproarious delight of the well-victualled company present, as also that of the two performers themselves. The entertainment for that day was concluded by a most chivalric offer on the part of Peter to dance with the bride.

"And by the powers, Master Ned, if dancing with the grandmother wönt earn me a right to dance with the granddaughter, I'd like to know what will! Faith," he added, "and maybe a good-looking chap like meself will just cut out the bridegroom!" So saying, he politely, considering the scratches on his face, made the offer, was accepted, and so finished the first day of the wedding — I *may add*, parenthetically, not before it was time, for the

majority of the company were — well, certainly more than *half* seas over.

So far the reader will say we have had a bride without a bridegroom. True, but then it was but the first day. While this joviality had been going on in the bride's father's house, a similar scene had been taking place at the bridegroom's dwelling. The real ceremony, the tying of the nuptial knot, was to take place on the morrow, when the bridegroom would come to the house of his bride's father in stately procession. Desiring to be an eye-witness of that procession from its beginning, accompanied by Peter, early the next morning, I went to the bridegroom's house.

Although we reached the happy swain's dwelling but a little after sunrise, we found the procession already marshalled.

"By the powers!" exclaimed Peter, in surprise, "they haven't been to bed all night on purpose to be up so early in the morning!"

That they *had* been up all night, and indulging very freely too, was obvious by their blood-shot eyes and not very steady gait. But the procession. Well, first and foremost in interest, then, was the youthful bridegroom, dressed in his best, and mounted upon a mule. Behind him was a man bearing a very handsome silver embossed shield, borrowed for the occasion from the chief of his province. Preceding the bridegroom were a great number of men carrying guns, all borrowed from the same dignitary, as well also as the *ambilta* and *cundam* of the chief, also lent for the occasion, and played all the way. Immediately behind the shield-bearer followed the *arkees*, some — at least those who could beg or borrow such an animal — mounted on mules, others walking, but all tricked out

in finery ; such, for instance, as silver amulets and chains, borrowed from the women of the neighborhood. As for the bridegroom, the naughty boy, be it remembered, of a day or two earlier, his mule was decked with Morocco leather and handsome brass neck ornaments ; while he himself, a king for the day, and with the pride of the son of a king, rode forward, with his cloth affectedly placed over his nose, and carrying himself as vainly as if all these fine things, gunners, guns, shields, and musical instruments had not been borrowed for the occasion, making him, as it were, the lord mayor of a day, and all his followers had been his slaves and subjects, instead of a parcel of people who estimated at its full value the quantity of *brounde* and mead they were sure to get, first from himself, and the next day from his hospitable father-in-law.

Now, as we were mounted, and attended by one of the head man's servants, Peter and I were warmly welcomed by the bride's own party. I may say doubly welcomed ; first as the head man's guests and friends, secondly as white men ; and thus were invited to fall in with the procession.

When we arrived at a small cleared space just without the village, a mounted warrior rode up to the bridegroom and the chief *arkee*, who was at the time riding by his friend's side, whispered a few words in his ear, and galloped back to the village. Then a halt was ordered, and the before-mentioned *arkee* having ridden up to the armed men, they broke rank, and, dividing themselves into two parties, began shouting war-cries, and presenting their pieces at each other.

"Peter," said I, somewhat alarmed, "they have had a sudden fall-out — there's a row coming — we must either *retreat* or choose sides ! Which shall it be ?"

"The weakest, of course, your honor," replied Peter, promptly, and at the same time looking to the lock of his rifle; "that is," he added, "if we can only make out which isn't both alike in strength!"

But the head man's servant growing alarmed at our menacing attitude, partly by gestures, partly by words — I had learned something of the Amharic — told me that there was no mischief afloat. Thus reassured, we simply stood by and witnessed a sham fight, got up, I afterwards discovered, to divert the bridegroom's mind, lest he should feel nervous upon entering the *dass* and beholding his partner elect.

But, in addition, the bridegroom was treated to the regular war-dance. Those of the men armed with shield and lance, shrieking wild cries, and making bounds and springs, approached the gun men sufficiently near to make feint of attack without getting within the line of fire; while the gunners, having satisfied their sham honor by equally sham demonstrations of battle, discharged their pieces in the air, and finished the awful conflict by madly sawing the wind with their swords.

By this time, I suppose, they deemed the bridegroom's nerves sufficiently braced to meet the bride and her family; for the belligerents again took their places in the procession, and with drums beating and colors flying we marched into the village.

. At the entrance to the *dass*, the bridegroom was welcomed by the head man, who at once led him to the seat of honor; namely, a well-cushioned couch placed beneath a canopy of white calico, so that the dust should not soil his well-buttered head of hair. In this position he sat in state; that is, with his nose and mouth covered by his cloth, his principal friend lying at his feet in the attitude of a

slave, and the members of his family and other friends ranged upon either side. After an hour's sitting in state, the awful ceremony was begun by the gallant warriors who had fought so desperately upon the road. These now commenced a savage onslaught upon nought human, but raw cow beef—*brounde*; in fact, the gormandizing scene of the day before was repeated upon a smaller scale. The meal concluded, the tying of the marriage knot was performed. It was a simple process.

The bride being brought into the *dass* covered over with a large cloth, the bridegroom came toward her, and was asked whether he would marry her; his reply being:

"Yes."

The young couple crooked their little fingers together under the cloth, and —

The ceremony was at an end!

"All this sack to this small quantity of bread, Jack!" says Prince Hal to Falstaff.

All that raw beef, beer, and bread, terrible rioting, and pompous processioning, to be concluded by the crooking of two little fingers!

"Botheration!" cried Peter, when we were told it was over, "is that all? Then in nothing it bates jumping over a broomstick, which, barring this, is the aisiest wedding I ever heard of."

The ceremony, however, was not *quite* over. The real termination was, when the bridegroom, taking the fair one by the shoulders, strictly according to Abyssinian etiquette, drove her, as if she had been an intruding dog, out of the door, and leaving her in the hands of his friends, returned within to accept from his wife's relatives the wedding presents. In conclusion I may add, that the *arkees*, a day or *two* after the ceremony, swear, under the cloth, forever

afterwards to act as brothers to the bride, — to feed her should she hunger, to give her drink should she thirst.

"Tell me, Joas," said I, when we returned to our hut, "what there is in my appearance or deportment, at least — in the eyes of your countrymen, that should so much have attracted their attention during the feast to-day; for, while eating, one or two of them, but principally the bridegroom's nearest relative, stayed their eating to regard me with a fixed, haughty, and certainly impertinent stare."

"You were eating also, Aito?"

"Yes."

"That was the cause; you did not make noise enough! The bridegroom's relative boasts of noble birth, and, according to my countrymen's ideas, every man who claims patrician descent should show it by making noises like those made by swine, while eating."

"By the powers, then, that gentleman must have come from an emperor at least, for he bate the loudest pig of my acquaintance!"

"Yes," continued Joas, "he and others doubtlessly regard you as a low person, unaccustomed to move in good society. Indeed, we have a proverb in Abyssinia, that it is only beggars and thieves who eat small pieces without making a noise."

"Alas!" I replied, laughing, "that sheer ignorance should have caused me to be guilty of such a monstrous breach of etiquette! Peter, suppose you and I take a few lessons?"

"Botheration! no, your honor! It's not I, by my own lave, that intend to go to the pigs yet!"

"It must not distress you, Aito! The head man is more intelligent than many of his countrymen; besides, you are his guest and friend. Doubtlessly by this time

he has told them that it is not the custom of your country ; and when morning comes you will probably find yourself the most popular person in the village."

"Very little opportunity I shall have, though, for at daybreak we must take leave of the worthy head man and his family," said I ; and with this determination I packed myself up, and lay down to sleep. But I have not described the Abyssinian process of packing oneself up for the night. Well, then, you take off your belt and trousers, and roll yourself up — head, feet, and face — in your cloth, like a mummy. It is rather disagreeable at first ; but you soon get used to it, and like it ; for it protects you from mosquitos, scorpions, and all other similar nocturnal lookers-in. As for the natives, it is not unusual to meet with whole families in one hut, closely packed up, twos and twos, after this fashion.

CHAPTER XVII.

A POLICE CASE—QUEER JUSTICE.

HAVING determined to quit the village at the earliest hour in the morning, my last words before going to sleep were :

"Peter, be sure to awake a little after daybreak;" for, like most old travellers who have seen service, he possessed the power almost of sleeping and awaking at pleasure; and such a well-disciplined soldier was he, that I believe he went to sleep with the order in his mind ready set, like an alarum clock, to awaken him at the stated time. Guess, then, my astonishment, or rather confusion, when, aroused by a rough tug at my shoulders, I saw that it was bright moonlight, and heard a hideous din of voices without.

"Faith," said Peter, "I have just 'roused your honor for fear you'd be disturbed! The devils have all got together, and they are calling to see you."

"You are an idiot, Peter! Leave me; lie down again!" I said, angrily.

Then, through the din of voices—which, by the way, was becoming louder and more discordant—I heard Joas say, "Aito, I said you would soon become popular. These people have heard of your intended departure to-morrow, and have assembled to do you honor."

"Plague take the honor! They might have had the civility to wait till morning," said I.

"The ould gentleman below take 'em, Master Ned, for isturbing you, and making me forget to wake at day-break!" said Peter.

Joas, however, coming to the rescue, went to the door, and throwing out a quantity of coins, bade them drink the Frank nobleman's health, when they departed in high lee; after which he told me that the party were beggars, who had visited the town professionally, expecting a good harvest from the wedding visitors. Their reason for disturbing my slumber was quaint enough, namely, to prevent my being attacked by melancholy.

This incident, by the way, reminds me of a similar story told by Bruce. Sometimes, when busy in his room, in the rainy season, there would be four or five hundred people "who all at once would begin, some groaning and crying, as if in pain, others demanding justice, as if they were that moment suffering, or on the instant about to be put to death, and some groaning and sobbing as if just expiring; and this horrible symphony was so artfully performed that no ear could distinguish but that it proceeded from real distress." The traveller "was often so surprised as to send the soldiers at the door to bring in one of them, thinking he had come from the country, to examine who had injured him. Many a time he was a servant of his own, or some other equally well known; or if he were a stranger, upon asking what misfortune had befallen him, he would answer very composedly, nothing; that he had been sleeping all day with the horses; that hearing from the people at the door that he had retired to his apartment, he and his companions had come to cry and make a noise under his window, to do him honor before the people, for fear he should be melancholy by being too quiet when *alone*, and therefore hoped that he would order them to

drink, that they might continue with a little more spirit." In most countries of the East beggars are a serious nuisance, but in Abyssinia they are a recognized institution. Bamfylde Moore Carew would have been canonized had he been born and died there. In the capital it is the constant practice to beset the king's doors and windows, within his majesty's hearing, and there, from early morning to night, to cry for justice as loudly as possible in a distressed and complaining tone, and in all the different languages they are masters of, in order to their being admitted to have their supposed grievances heard. In a country so ill-governed as Abyssinia, and so perpetually involved in war, it may be easily supposed there is no want of people who have real injuries and violence to complain of; but if it were not so, this is so much the constant usage that when it happens (as in the midst of the rainy season) that few people can approach the capital, or stand without in such bad weather, a set of vagrants are provided, maintained, and whose paid, sole business it is to cry and lament as if they had been really very much injured and oppressed; and this they will tell you, is for the king's honor, that he may not be too lonely by the palace being too quiet.

But to resume my narrative.

Having got rid of our visitors, and it being useless to attempt to finish our sleep, we waited patiently until the proper hour, sunrise, and then leaving Joas and the camel-driver to get the animals ready, Peter and I went to the head man's dwelling; and, *sans ceremonie*, were shown into his sleeping-chamber.

He was in the hands of his valet, dressing to receive me.

"Och! the dirty gintleman!" whispered Peter, pinching his nose.

"Hush, Peter! people mustn't have too fine noses who travel in Abyssinia." I could not, however, help mentally exclaiming, "By Jove, it is intolerable!"

The fact was, our worthy host was sitting upon a small bench, perfectly nude, while his servant was greasing him down; that is, rubbing or shampooing him all over with a powerfully unpleasant smelling butter, at least so I took it to be, as it ran from his hair in copious and thick drip-pings.

"Aito," said he, after the first salutation, "Do you ever indulge in the luxury of a greasing?"

Now, remembering the mistake in etiquette I had made in the item of eating, and not wishing to be altogether *mauvais ton*, I replied:

"Not often, chief, it would be too costly; it is the luxury of a rich man."

"True," he replied, "but it is a pity, for it is elephant's grease, and makes people very strong, and improves the skin."

"It is a pity," I replied; "but the poor cannot indulge in luxuries."

"*Wa!*" he exclaimed; adding, after a minute's thought, and, I believe, a little coolly (for, in Abyssinia, as elsewhere, the heat of your best friend's feelings run down a degree or so at the word poverty), "The Aito is not, then, a man of rank and wealth in his own country?"

"Who'd have thought him such a cowl'd, calculating, ould skin-flint?" muttered Peter.

"The worthy chief," said I, "is wrong. I am rich, and of noble birth also, and the equal of any chief in Abyssinia."

"Bedad," muttered Peter, "and that's talking small too, when you consider that a little thimble-full of the O'Don-

nell blood bates in quality an entire Nile of the puddle in the veins of these savages !”

“The Aito himself declared he was poor,” said the chief.

“So I am in this land. If you, O chief, were travelling beyond the great waters in my country, would it be possible for you to carry on your back your cows, mules, and lands ?”

“Bedad, there have been *big* giants in Ireland, but the biggest O’Porter of the lot ’ud have been bothered to carry that on his knot !” again muttered Peter.

“*Wa !*” said the chief, “the Aito’s words are good ; he is only poor in this country !” Then after a moment’s thought, he added, “But the Aito is my good friend ; he has eaten of my *brounde* ; let him say the word, and my servant shall cover him with elephant’s grease ; for I am rich, and have it in abundance.”

“By the powers, your honor’s in for a big trate !” said Peter, laughing.

It was a dilemma, truly ; but I deserved it, for I had been guilty of a falsehood ; so I at once told the chief that I did not like even the scent of the grease ; moreover, that it was contrary to the custom of my country ; adding, to Peter, “I will recommend you ; so strip !”

“Och bother ! Master Ned,” he replied, “do ye believe me shirt’s such a tight fit I can’t get it on without making a greasy poll of meself ?”

The chief after this importuned me no longer, and continued his toilet ; the latter portion of it, by the way, being much more agreeable to bystanders than the former. The greasing operation over, he went into another apartment, and having been deluged with water, he returned, and was anointed with a sweet-smelling ointment, of the consistence of honey. His toilet being thus complete, we went

out of the house with him to meet his sons. With the sons was also a crowd of the villagers, who had assembled for the express purpose of bidding the illustrious white strangers "goodby;" a ceremony not a little tiring, I assure you, for the good people having been given to understand that the Franks "shook hands," each individual, man, woman, and youth, desired the honor, all holding my fingers with a vice-like grasp. But those who assumed to be particular friends "signified the same," as they say at public meetings, not by "holding up" *their* hands, but by moving mine, arm and all, up and down as vehemently as if they believed thereby they could pump out a stock of European good feeling large enough to last until the next white man passed that way.

"Hilloa there! mark time! halt! You'll be after pulling my arm out of the socket!" cried Peter, who was suffering from a like exuberance of cordiality. Then, suddenly missing his hunting-knife, and purse containing a few small coins, from his girdle or belt, shaking his fist angrily at the people, he added:

"So, while some of ye's been pumping my arm out of its socket, others have been picking me pocket!"

"Quiet, Peter; do not strike; we will discover the thief," said I; and having told the head man that my servant had been robbed by one of his people, he angrily addressed the mob, telling them that there was a thief among them. "But the Aito's property shall be found, and the rogue punished. Go, then," he added, to one of his sons, "and tell the *Lebashi* to smell out the thief immediately."

At the very name of that most dreaded official the mob dispersed, each running off to his own hut, frightened out of his wits; and well they might be, as the reader will *speedily* admit.

"The Lebashi? what's that — a constable?" asked Peter.

"A policeman; probably a detective," said I; and it was near the truth. And so, much vexed at this further delay, we returned to our hut, there to await the result of the Lebashi's labors. But what is this Lebashi? asks the reader. Well, he is a kind of inspector of thief *smeller*.

When a theft has been committed, the victim gives information to the Lebashi. The official then, to stimulate the olfactory nerves of his subordinate, gives the latter a certain dose of black meal compounded with milk, and immediately afterward makes him smoke tobacco. The effect of the combination is to throw the smeller into a state of frenzy. The Lebashi, then fastening a long cord round the body, holds the other end securely. The smeller falls upon all fours, and dragging the Lebashi after him as a dog might his master if held by a chain, goes in that position smelling from house to house. You may imagine the terrible anxiety of the whole of the villagers during the smelling; for any person at whom he points is at once accounted the thief. Indeed, so little do the people themselves believe in this catholicon for thief catching and that this queer detective is sure to point at the guilty man, that nervous persons — if there be any such in the wilderness — to conciliate, or at least not provoke him, are continually making him presents, so that he has no bad berth; but I am afraid they are no worse as regards bribes than many of their brother policeman in Europe.

When the smeller stops at a particular house, it is significant at once that therein lies the thief, or at least the stolen property. Having smelt at the doorway for a few minutes to make quite sure, he crawls into the house, and jumps upon the owner's bed, and thereupon stretches him-

self to sleep. A sufficient time having elapsed, the Le-bashi thrashes the slumberer with a stick until he awakes. The owner of the house is then arrested, and taken before the priests to pay the value of the lost property, if not found in the house; but if found, to undergo a sound whipping. Thus it is not to be wondered that the population tremble when the Lebashi and his smeller are seen in the streets.

About midday we were summoned to the presence of the head man. A miserable fellow, whom we afterwards heard was the poorest man in the village, stood trembling in custody of two of our host's servants. "Behold, O Aito," said the head man to me, "in this man a miserable wretch, who has forever disgraced the village by plundering the guests of his chief!"

The man, however, protested his innocence so strongly that I believed him, and suggested that as neither coins nor knife had been found upon his person or in his hut, that he should not be punished. In this I was supported by Peter, who said:

"Faith, Master Ned; it isn't this man at all that's the thief; the things haven't been found upon him; so you may tell this respectable ould gintleman that I wont prosecute, and his worship had better let him off."

This speech I translated to the best of my ability. It was, however, to little purpose; for the magistrate, having full faith in the smeller, and being resolved to settle the matter to at least his own satisfaction, signalled to the attendants, and there and then the prisoner was thrown upon the ground, and a robust fellow began to strike him with a thick rattan cane upon the bare back. During the first twenty blows the poor wretch roared lustily, and begged *for mercy*.

"Silence, thou miserable dog," cried the chief, "or double shall be the size of the stick and the number of the blows!" whereupon the poor fellow instantly became silent and bore the remainder of his punishment without a murmur. Peter, however, believing thoroughly in his innocence, cried:

"Och! botheration take the knife and the dirty coins. The man shant have any more of this upon my account." But in the struggle (for he had rushed forward and was pulling the prisoner away) he struck the fellow who was so dexterously and with evident glee using his cane, when—

Lo! the lost coins fell from the mouth of the punisher: they had been concealed in his cheek!

The audience stood paralyzed with astonishment, — the real thief apparently as much so as the others.

It's you, then, you villain, who are the thief — you who have been thrashing this poor fellow so lustily! This beats robbing a comrade of his kit; but, by the powers, I'll take a little of the thieving out of your ugly carcass! and Peter would have pummelled the fellow to a mummy but for my interference.

"Touch him not, Peter," said I; "he is in the hands of the head man."

But, to our astonishment, the real rogue with the greatest coolness declared that he was innocent. It was true, he said, that the coins had fallen from *his* mouth, but then, he added, "this rogue, with the assistance of the evil spirit, placed them there without my knowing it, to save himself and ruin me in the eyes of the chief!"

"What is the dirty fellow saying?" asked Peter; "why don't they tie him up to the triangles and bate the dishonesty out of him?"

I told *him*.

Peter replied not, but stood stricken with astonishment. The rogue then, adding perjury to theft, took an oath that he was innocent — nay, declared that it was even possible the lost knife had been placed within the folds of his cloth by the same invisible agency which had hidden the coins in his mouth.

For a few minutes the head man remained silent, as if in doubt what course to take. But the cunning rogue, as a last proof of his innocence, appealed to the infallibility of the *Lebashi* and his smeller, whereupon the head man sapiently replied, addressing me :

“Aito, this man is right ; the wretch upon the ground is the thief. He must, as the last accused says, be in communication with an evil spirit. How else could he have placed the coins in the mouth, and the knife in the cloth of this man ?”

“But,” said I, “the *Lebashi* and his man *may* have made a mistake — it is possible.”

“The noble Aito is wrong. The *Lebashi* *never* fails to discover the guilty party. I have proved it. I ordered one of my servants to conceal my best cloth in a house in the village, without the knowledge of a single person. Then ordering the *Lebashi* to search for the garment, he straightway proceeded to the very house and brought away the garment. Since, however, the knife and coins can be restored to their owner, and to do honor to the noble stranger, this rogue shall be released without further punishment.”

Thus ended this curious police examination. How would my readers like to trust themselves in the hands of Abyssinian detectives and police magistrates ? This decision, however, absurd as it seems, was scarcely worse than that arrived at by Abyssinian judges in the

TRIAL OF A LITTLE BOY FOR HOMICIDE.

Two little boys were playing in the woods near a village. Wandering about they chanced to see a tree called *owleh*, on whose branches was a quantity of ripe wild fruit. The fruit is not very delicious, not more so than the hips and haws found on our hedges; yet any one who remembers the pleasure with which in his boyish days these berries were collected and eaten, will excuse our young heroes when I relate how, having looked upon the fruit, they longed for it; but though the *owleh* is not usually of very large growth, still the lowest branches were above their reach. To climb the tree was an arduous task, for these children were but the ages of eight and five. The temptation, however, proved superior to the obstacles, and the elder boy with some difficulty succeeded in reaching the desired object. Higher and higher he mounted, till at last he stood on a bough from which he could gather the best fruit; and then with what feelings of joy and pride at his superior age and powers did he help himself, and throw down a supply to his little companion. But "Pride will have a fall!" and whether in this case it was brought about by the breaking of the bough, or his foot slipping, I cannot well remember; but, however it may have been, the old adage proved true, and down came our climber right on the head of his little comrade, who happened at that moment to be standing with upturned eyes, and expectant mouth, waiting a fresh shower of the golden berries. The elder lad got up unhurt beyond a few bruises; but, to his horror, his friend rose not from the ground. He shook him, spoke to him, pinched him, but all to no purpose. The little fellow was dead!

The elder child, shocked and frightened at having so

unwittingly caused his companion's death, ran home, and told his mother all about it. The story got wind in the village, and the parents of the deceased child brought home the body, and set up howling and lamenting over it. Moreover, nothing would satisfy them but that the elder boy should be put on trial for his life, as having been the cause of the other's death. This they urged in the hope, no doubt, of a compromise in money from his family, or, in other words, making the best they could of a bad business.

The trial was long ; but after much examination of the different books, and many opinions taken of the wisest men in the country, it was ultimately concluded that of a truth the boy was by law guilty of death. But how was he to be killed? Why, of course, as he had killed the other ; so, in fact, the sentence was, that the dead boy's brother should climb the tree and tumble down on the other's head till he killed him. This, however, did not suit the feelings of the deceased's mother ; for, thought she, "if I consent to this, perhaps my other boy may die, or injure himself in his fall more than the boy he has to kill." So she preferred letting the culprit off, to risking the life of her only surviving son.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE ARE ATTACKED BY MONKEYS.

AT daybreak the next morning, as we were mounting our mules, the head man came, followed by two attendants, — one leading a small white pony laden with several leathern bags filled with water, a gourd of fresh milk, and a basket of provisions; the other driving before him a young cow.

"Aito," said the chief, "you are my friend! I bring you a cow, provisions, and water to help you on your way through the desert."

"Chief," I replied, "it is true you *have* been my good friend! I shall ever remember it; and should I see the great Emperor of Abyssinia, I will tell him of your hospitality to his friends, the Christian Franks, and devotion to his royal person."

"The noble Frank's features will remain impressed upon the heart of his servant, the poor head man of the wilderness," was the reply. "He will accept these small offerings," he added.

Now, we had no notion of *brounde*, much less of cutting a steak now and then during our journey off a live animal; and so, as respectfully as possible, I declined the cow, but with many thanks accepted the water and provisions.

"*Wa!*" he exclaimed, as if in pity for my bad taste; the noble Aito does not like *brounde*; he has not lived

long enough among the children of the wilderness. But this white horse — he will take that?" he added.

"Not so, chief," I replied; "we do not require it, and it would be robbing you."

But to this refusal he would not listen. "Aito," he said, firmly, "you *must* not refuse to *borrow* this horse. True, it is not handsome, it is not young; but it *may prove of the greatest service in crossing the wilds.*"

"Accept the horse, Aito," whispered Joas; "there is a hidden meaning in the chief's words." Therefore I replied, in the redundant style of the country:

"Chief, I dare no longer decline the animal, for have you not been as father, mother, and brother to me?"

"It is good," he replied. "I shall now sleep in happiness, for the Aito will be safe. Will the noble Frank," he added, "leave the horse with the great Chief of Adoua, my lord and master? for then it will be of no further service to him."

"The horse shall be duly delivered to the Chief of Adoua," said I. Then, shaking him heartily by the hand, I bade him farewell, and speedily we were descending the hill which led into the *Quolla*, or valley.

At that time of the year, Joas warned me that fever and ague were rife in the Quolla country, and could I have timed my journey, I certainly should have rested in the highlands for a better season. As it was, I consoled myself with the sailors' adage, that "a light heart and a thin pair of breeches will carry a man anywhere."

The first day we passed through a charming country; — rocky hills on both sides, covered with the sweet-scented jessamine, and decorated with a creeper of the mistletoe kind, from amidst whose dark green leaves peeped forth flowers of brilliant scarlet; a grassy carpet, of the most

delightful pattern, speckled, as it were, with flowers of every hue; the aloe, and scarlet mimosas, with their pink, yellow, and white flowers, and emitting a fragrance that perfumed the air for miles.

At night we pitched our tent upon a small grass plot, with the rocky side of the valley to our right and a small wood to the left. Eyeing the latter from a military point of view, Peter said:

"We had better throw up an embankment between the tent and that wood; or, maybe, as the rock here cuts off our retreat on the other side, we'll only wake to find ourselves in the jaws of a wild beast."

"No," said I; "let us kindle a fire; it will afford us greater protection against wild beasts;" and having secured the animals to the tent-poles, we at once set to work, gathered fuel, and lighted two fires; after which, we sat down to supper. But, alas! we had not a pint of water left; the leathern bags being insecurely fastened at the mouths, all the fluid had run out; neither did we know where to search for a stream or a spring. This was a sad disappointment. However, it was of no use grumbling; so, dividing the little we had, share and share alike, we finished our supper, and stretching ourselves upon the mats, were soon in the arms of Somnus. At early morn we were aroused by a terrible noise, — shrieking, chattering, screaming, and pattering of feet.

"The Gallas are upon us!" we cried, almost simultaneously; and, seizing our firearms, we ran out of the tent.

"Gallas do you call them?" laughingly cried Peter, as we came in sight of the enemy. "Why, it's a whole wilderness of monkeys!"

"Still they may prove formidable foes," said I, and with good reason; for at least a hundred of the brutes were

descending the slope in something very like battle array; indeed, in a few minutes more they would have been turning over our provision stores; for I have little doubt but that one of their scouts had scented them among the baggage, and had reported his discovery to his friends and relatives; hence the demonstration. A single volley, however, from our pieces, and the animals turned tail, and were beating a retreat, leaving behind two killed and one wounded.

"The impertinent bastes!" cried Peter, as we returned within the tent, "to think they could steal a march upon three dacent Christians and a nigger!"

"Ah," said Joas, "it is fortunate we heard them, for we might have lost bag and baggage. They are *Cynocephali*, the very cleverest of the monkey tribe." Then, while we were at breakfast, Joas entertained us with the following account of the animals:

"The *cynocephali*," said he, "have their chief, whom they obey implicitly, and a regular system of tactics in war, pillaging expeditions, robbing cornfields, etc. These monkey-forays are managed with the utmost regularity and precaution. A tribe, coming down to feed from their village on the mountain (usually a cleft in the face of some cliff), brings with it all its members, male and female, old and young; some, the elders of the tribe, distinguishable by the quantity of mane which covers their shoulders like a lion, take the lead, peering cautiously over each precipice before they descend, and climbing to the top of every rock or stone which may afford them a better view of the road before them; others have their posts as scouts on the flank or rear, and all fulfil their duties with the utmost vigilance, calling out at times, apparently to keep order among the motley pack which forms the main body, or to give notice

of the approach of any real or imagined danger. Their tones of voice on these occasions are so distinctly varied, that a person much accustomed to watch their movements will at length fancy, and perhaps with some truth, that he can understand their signals.

"The main body is composed of females, inexperienced males, and young people of the tribe; those of the females who have small children carry them on their back. Unlike the dignified march of the leaders, the rabble go along in a most disorderly manner, trotting on and chattering, without taking the least heed of anything, apparently confiding in the vigilance of their scouts. Here a few of the youth linger behind to pick the berries off some tree; but not long; for the rearguard coming up forces them to regain their places; there a matron pauses for a moment to suckle her offspring, and, not to lose time, dresses its hair while it is taking its meal; another younger lady, probably excited by jealousy, or by some sneering look or word, pulls an ugly mouth at her neighbor, and then, uttering a shrill squeel highly expressive of rage, vindictively snatches at her rival's leg or tail with her hand, and gives her perhaps a bite in the hindquarters; this provokes a retort, and a most unladylike quarrel ensues, till a loud bark of command from one of the chiefs calls them to order. A single cry of alarm makes them all halt, and remain on the *qui vive*, till another bark in a different tone reassures them, and they then proceed on their march.

"Arrived at the cornfields, the scouts take their position on the eminences all round, while the remainder of the tribe collect provision with the utmost expedition, filling their cheek-pouches as full as they can hold, and then tucking the heads of corn under their armpits. Now, unless there be a partition of the collected spoil, how do the

scouts feed? for I have watched them several times, and never observed them quit for a moment their post of duty till it was time for the tribe to return, or till some indication of danger induced them to take to flight. They show also the same sagacity in searching for water, discovering at once the places where it is most readily found in the sand, and then digging for it with their hands just as men would, relieving one another in the work if the quantity of sand to be removed be considerable.

"Their dwellings are usually chosen in clefts of rocks, so as to protect them from the rain, and always placed so high that they are inaccessible to most other animals; the leopard is their worst enemy; for being nearly as good a climber, he sometimes attacks them, managing to steal a young one and make off; but he seldom ventures to attack a full-grown ape, for that animal's great strength and activity, and the powerful canine teeth with which he is furnished, would render him a formidable enemy, were he, from desperation, forced to stand and defend his life."

"Does your honor believe all this of the animals? It's almost as queer as the story of the monkey, the sultan, and the princess Mr. Joas told us about," said Peter.

"Of course I do," said I. But for fear some of my readers should be as sceptical as Peter, I will repeat a story told by Mr. Parkyns, of an adventure he had with a monkey of this tribe, and which, to a considerable extent, shows that the cleverness of the *cynocephali* depends in some measure upon power of reflection, and not entirely on that instinct with which all animals are endowed, and which serves them only to procure the necessaries of life, and to defend themselves against their enemies.

"At Kartoum," says this traveller, "I saw a man showing a large male and two females of this breed, who per-

formed several clever tricks at his command. I entered into conversation with him as to their sagacity, the mode of teaching, and various other topics relating to them. Speaking of his male monkey, he said that he was the most dexterous thief imaginable, and that every time he was exhibited, he stole dates and other provisions sufficient for his food for the day. In proof of this, he begged me to watch him for a few minutes. I did so, and presently the keeper led him to a spot near a date-seller, who was sitting on the ground, with his basket beside him.

"Here his master put him through his evolutions, and although I could perceive that the monkey had an eye to the fruit, so completely did he disguise his intentions, that no careless observer would have noticed it. He did not at first appear to care about approaching the basket; but gradually brought himself nearer and nearer, till at last he got quite close to its owner. In the middle of one of his feats he suddenly started up from the ground on which he was lying, stretched like a corpse, and uttering a cry as of pain or rage, fixed his eyes full at the face of the date-seller, and then without moving the rest of his body, stole as many dates as he could hold in one of his hind hands, (apes are not quadrupeds, but quadrumana). The date-man being stared out of countenance, and his attention diverted by this extraordinary movement, knew nothing about the theft till a bystander told him of it, and then he joined heartily in the laugh that was raised against him. The monkey, having very adroitly popped the fruit into his cheek-pouches, had moved off a few yards, when a boy in the crowd round him pulled him sharply by the tail. Conscience-stricken, he fancied it had been done in revenge by the date-seller whom he had robbed; and so passing close by the true offender, and between the legs of one or

two others in the circle, he fell on the unfortunate fruiterer, and would, no doubt, have bitten him severely but for the interference of his master, who came to the rescue.

"I have never thought it worth while to teach monkeys of my own any tricks, always preferring to watch their natural actions. I had, in Abyssinia, a young one of the same breed as the last mentioned. From the first day she was given to me, her attachment was remarkable, and nothing would induce her to leave me at any time; in fact, her affection was sometimes ludicrously annoying. As she grew up she became more sedate, and was less afraid of being left alone. She would sit and watch whatever I did with an expression of great intelligence, and the moment I turned my back she would endeavor to imitate what I had been doing. M. Rodatz, master of the German brig *Alf*, coming up the country for a cargo of animals for Mauritius, gave me a copy of 'Peter Simple,' the first English book, besides the Bible and Nautical Almanac, that I had seen for more than two years. As soon as I was alone, I of course sat down and began greedily to feast on its contents, though I had read it several times before leaving England. 'Lemdy' was as usual seated beside me, at times looking quietly at me, occasionally catching a fly, or jumping on my shoulder, endeavoring to pick out the blue marks tattooed there.

"At last I got up to light a pipe, and on my return found she had taken my seat, with the book on her knee, and, with a grave expression of countenance, was turning over the leaves page by page, as she had observed me to do, with this difference only, that, not being able to read their contents, she turned one after the other as quickly as possible, and from her arms being short, and not yet much used to books, she tore each page from the top nearly to

the bottom. She had completed the destruction of half the volume before I returned. During my momentary absences she would often take up my pipe and hold it to her mouth till I came back, when she would restore it with the utmost politeness.

"These monkeys are caught in various ways. One plan adopted by the Arabs or Tàka has struck me as the most simple, and at the same time as likely to succeed as any other. Large jars of the common country beer, sweetened with dates, and drugged with the juice of the *òscher* (*Asclepias arborea*), are left near the places where they come to drink. The monkeys, pleased with the sweetness of the beverage, drink largely of it, and soon falling asleep, are taken senseless by the Arabs who have been watching from a distance."

CHAPTER XIX.

A FIGHT WITH THE BLACKS.

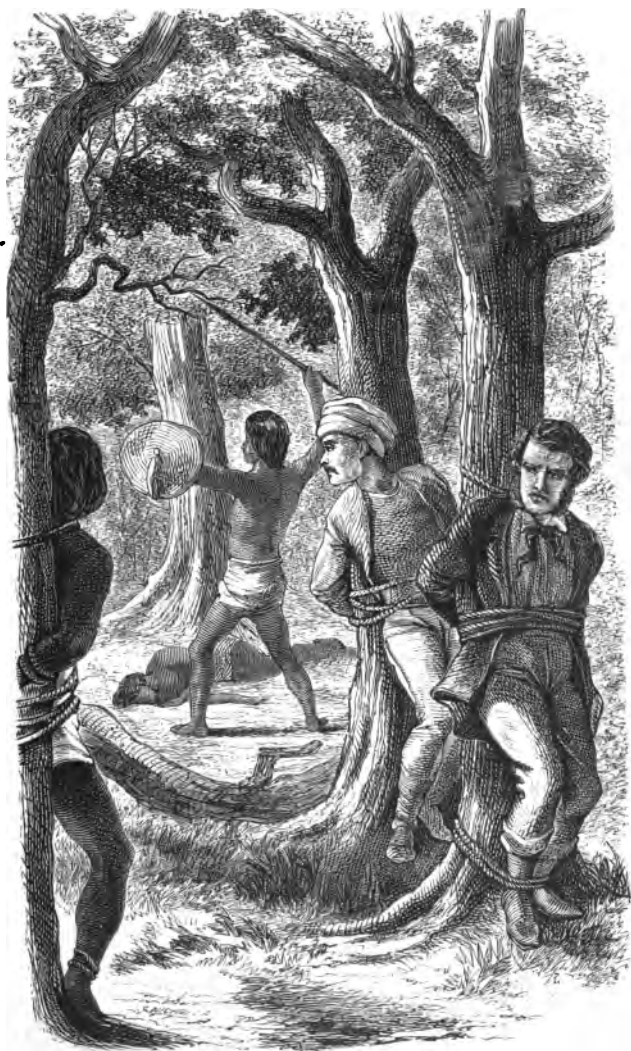
PETER having listened very intently to Joas's account of the cynocephali, said at its conclusion, "Now, it's my belief, Mr. Joas, that them beasts aint no monkeys at all, but, barring their tails, which sartinly I never seed even on a nigger, just deserters who *wont* talk like Christians for fear of being 'listed again."

"Silence, Peter!" I exclaimed, rather angrily; for I could see from Joas's countenance he did not like being continually bantered.

"Axing your honor's pardon," replied the incorrigible Peter, "it's my opinion, anyhow; for what u'd be the use of making beasts of the field so clever? it 'ud be setting up an opposition to mankind; for these monkeys are a deal cleverer than some men I have known — present company always excepted. No, no, your honor; Mr. Joas, you'll never make an old soldier like me believe a monkey's only a man with a tail on."

"You are too old a soldier, Peter, not to know that it's mutiny to argue with your officer," I replied, laughing. "But, come, come," I added, "we are wasting time; let us go in search of water; the animals are famishing."

"That's true, Master Ned; and I am a beast to have forgotten it," he replied. Then throwing the water-bags across the back of one of the mules, and leaving the others



A SHARP FIGHT WITH THE BLACKS.

with the baggage in charge of the camel-driver, we strolled along by the side of the rock a distance of at least five miles, but without finding water.

"Botheration," cried Peter, "why didn't we catch one of those clever monkeys and make him find water for us! Hilloa! hurrah! we'll do without the monkeys this time!" he added, pointing to a glass-like surface about a dozen yards in front of us.

On reaching the spot we found it to be a small, shallow pool, or pond, of about a quarter of an acre in extent.

"I'll trate myself to a tubbing; for it's mata and drink too in a climate like this, and maybe your honor and Mr. Joas will do the same," said Peter.

"A good notion, too, Peter," said I; and, commencing to strip, we should have been in the hole the next minute, but fortunately (that is, for ourselves, not the animal) the half-famished mule, delighted at the sight of water, gave a snort, and, darting forward, was soon plunging about in the refreshing, albeit dirty, element.

"It is a reproach to us; we should have thought of the poor animal first," said I. But almost as I spoke, the mule, putting its nose beneath the water, went down head-foremost, leaving only its hindquarters above.

"Botheration! what's come to the beast?" cried Peter.

"It's easily explained," I replied, bringing my rifle to my shoulder and sending a bullet at the snout of a huge crocodile which every now and then, as the mule struggled and plunged, showed itself just above water. The shot, however, did not tell, and in a minute more the crocodile had disappeared, mule and all.

"Thank Heaven," I cried, "for our narrow escape!"

"Ay, ay, Master Ned, we may well do that;" and si-

multaneously we fell upon our knees and offered up a thanksgiving for our safety.

"Now, Peter, fill the bags," I said; for fortunately the mule, in its sudden rush towards the water, had shaken them off its back.

"Ay, ay, sir; but hadn't we better first try and square accounts with the dirty thief that's robbed us of the mule?"

"No, Peter; powder and bullets are too valuable," said I. So, having filled the bags, we returned towards our tent, wondering how the amphibious monster could have been the tenant of a mere pool so far away from any river. This Joas soon explained to my satisfaction. "The peasants," he said, "believe that these are land crocodiles. They are really emigrants, who in the rainy season stray inland and settle in the first pool or hole. On the outskirts of my native village," he continued, "an immense crocodile was once killed in a sort of natural well from which the people were in the habit of drawing their water. For a long period past, sheep had at intervals disappeared in a very unaccountable way, till one day the crocodile seized a girl, who was in the act of filling her pitcher."

"Bedad," cried Peter, "it's a queer country this, intirely; where the monkeys are soldiers, barring the uniform, and the crocodiles have inland residences! Ugh!" he added, with a shudder, "only to think how queer one *might* have been feeling about this time, with one leg, or may be a head, tucked in a crocodile's jaws!"

"Hush, Aito!—stay!" whispered Joas, as I was about to answer, and he fell at full length, with one ear upon the ground.

"It's taken queer he is," said Peter, in surprise.

"Hush!" I said.

About three minutes having elapsed, Joas arose. "There

are people near, in yon jungle ; they are warriors, perhaps robbers," he said, pointing to the dense bushes about fifty yards to our right.

"Whew !" whistled Peter, "we shall have some foighting now before we get home — bad luck to me for giving such a sweet name to a tent in the wilderness !"

"They may," said I, "be travellers, like ourselves ; but how many do they muster, think you ?"

"Ten, perhaps twenty ; but they are not mere travellers ; they have neither mules nor camels. They are soldiers or robbers," he replied ; adding, as he pointed to a tree of immense girth, "we will get behind that, it will protect us."

"Botheration !" said Peter, indignantly, "do ye think that English soldiers are going to skulk behind a tree to get out of the way of a few dirty savages ?"

"For your lives, quick !" cried Joas ; and taking an arm of each, he fairly pulled us behind the tree. Fortunately for us he did, for the next minute a dozen arrows pierced the bark.

"Bedad, I'll send 'em a messenger ; may be it'll bring the thieves out."

"No ; reserve your fire," I said, lifting upwards Peter's rifle. Thinking of an old ruse, I pulled off my cap and placed it on the top of my rifle. Whirr-whirrr-whirr-whirr came a volley of arrows. I acknowledged the compliment by sending a bullet. A prolonged groan followed.

"I'll follow up that shot," said Peter.

"No, no ; you and Joas hold fire. They will probably attempt to surround us."

I was right in my conjecture. With a wild shriek of defiance some ten or twelve men, dark as blackest night, sprang forward, presenting, unfortunately for themselves,

a very bold front. I gave the word "Fire!" A report, and the foremost savage reeled over; the others stood paralyzed either with astonishment or fear at the deadly accuracy with which each shot had told.

"Now, Joas!" I said, vexed that he had reserved his fire.

"No, no, Aito; I dare not take life," he replied.

"By the powers, that's being a *leetle* too particular just now!" said Peter; adding, "here, give me the rifle. It is their lives or ours, the dirty thieves!" and another shot was sent with the same result: and better; for the remaining savages, giving a yell of mingled rage and disappointment, fled into the path by which we had come.

"That is suspicious; they have a reinforcement at hand. To return by that path will be fatal; we shall be overpowered by numbers," said Joas.

"But by what path *can* we return?" I asked.

"By one of our own making, through the jungle," he replied. "Hasten; for if they suspect us they will cut us off," he said.

"You are right, Joas; there is no alternative."

"So, onwards, fighting our way through an almost impenetrable jungle, getting a deep scratch at every step; at times stumbling up a hillock, at another tumbling into a bog; but worse than all, not knowing where we were going. And so hour after hour passed away; darkness was coming — hunger *had* come. From time to time Joas, who knew the country, would climb a tree to make out our bearing. But now night was approaching. In the distance, we could hear the snort and heavy tread of the rhinoceros, and the roar of the lion. Moreover, we believed from certain sounds that the robbers, reinforced, were endeavoring to encircle us. At length, exhausted, I almost determined

to lie down and sleep in the wilderness, despite lions, reptiles, and savages ; but then the two words "British pluck" were before my mind's eye, and the remembrance of the wonders it had accomplished were engraven upon my memory. But most of all to confirm me in my resolve to fight out difficulties, be they what they might, was the steady tramp, tramp of Peter, and the kind of comic, although hearty growl he would at intervals give, at savages in general, for whom, by the way, he entertained, as far as fighting went, a profound contempt.

"Shure, Master Ned," he exclaimed, at one point, "it's a disgrace for the like of us to be skulking through these bushes and brambles, when just by a good stand-up fight we might have gone back as we came."

"Come, come, Peter, no grumbling; what's done can't be helped; so forward, my boy!"

"Ay, ay, Master Ned, *forward*, of course; still that wont alter the *might have been*, you know. Hilloa!" he added, suddenly, "here's a pathway ready made for us!"

"It is the track of an elephant or rhinoceros," said Joas.

"Good luck to the big baste, then, for his kindness, and it's a pity we couldn't get one to march at the head of the regiment all through this jungle."

"Stay, what have we here?" I said, as a few yards ahead I saw a great single-horned beast quietly browsing upon the prickly shrubs.

"By the powers! it's the gentleman himself that we were just speaking about," said Peter; "shall we give him a volley?"

"No," cried Joas, "he is harmless if unattacked; his head is turned from us; he will force his way through the thistles upon which he is browsing without even looking at us, if we do not provoke him."

Joas was right; in half an hour, during which time we rested, the great brute walked away like a tame cow, except, indeed, that he walked as easily and quietly through the bush, by force of his immense bulk, as if it had been but weeds or bulrushes.

Passing onwards, we ascended a small hill. Having, however, reached the top, a fiendish shouting saluted our ears. "The blacks have been following us; look to your rifle, Peter!" I cried.

But, looking around, we could see nothing human. That, however, was not to be wondered at; for it was too dark. Suddenly, there came other sounds — crackle, crackle, crackle; and then flames darted fitfully upwards to the right — to the left — to the front — to the rear of us. "Great heavens!" I exclaimed, "the villains have fired the jungle!"

"They have indeed!" cried Joas, despairingly.

"Let us listen, Master Ned, and, if we hear the rascals, first send a volley in the direction of the sounds, and then dash forward."

"No, no," said Joas; "the rogues are cunning, and are in ambush; so that, if we even succeed in passing through the fire, we may be shot down."

"Do you mane, then," cried Peter, indignantly, "to advise us to remain here and be roasted like sucking pigs?"

"No, no; but be patient, and in a minute or two we may have a chance of escape without the risk of falling into an ambush."

I shall never forget the sensation of terror during those few minutes. Upon the apex of a hill — the jungle around on fire — the dry wood crackle, crackle, crackle — flame and smoke increasing moment by moment — to be *burned* alive! It was a horrible doom! But a similar

scene has been described by the Rev. Mr. Stern, the most recent of Abyssinian travellers. "Climbing," says he, "up the rugged acclivities, an unspeakably grand spectacle presented itself to our gaze. The whole country to the north and east, far beyond the limits of the eye's range, mountains and valleys, rocks and chasms, all lay bathed in one mighty mass of bright blazing fire. Not knowing which way to take — for the devouring element came crackling and hissing near to the spot where we stood — I turned to my servants, and inquired for the path we could safely pursue; but they were in terror of the hyenas and leopards, whose howls and yells rang ominously through the illuminated night air. They only thought of their own safety; and, whether I followed or not, they sped on between crackling trees and flaming grasses towards a black spot which was faintly visible through the fitful conflagration. The hot and clammy vapors which every gust of wind drove straight across our path, parched our lips, and produced a suffocating sensation in our heaving chests. Still we dared not stop; but were compelled to hasten on in search of a safe retreat. Now and then the fierce blaze, leaping and tossing in uncontrollable rage over every opposing barrier, presented a sight that filled the beholder with wonder, awe, and delight. A huge mountain, just opposite to our path, around which the lurid flame rolled its desolating flood, afforded a sight I shall never forget. Now the red fire lighted it up to its summit with an intense bright glow; now volumes of thin white smoke suffused it with ghastly hues; anon, again, the ever-shifting winds shrouded it in impenetrable darkness. I watched for some time this grand rampart, which, like a rock amidst the lashing waves, bade defiance to the devouring elements, when suddenly a severe blast swept a fiery torrent through the blackened

underwood into furrows clothed with rank grass, and in an instant the white, vapory clouds, ignited by the freshening breeze, spread upwards and around until the whole mountain, to its wooded summit, flared and flickered in a blood-red flame, that diffused a glaring light for many miles over the surrounding country."

"Aito," cried Joas, joyfully, after a few minutes' pondering, "we shall be safe, but we must fight the flames."

"Foight the flames!" repeated Peter; "shure thin, it's just what we want to do — but how?"

"With the boughs of this," he replied, touching a tree, the branches of which were quite green and humid.

"Shure, it's nonsense you're talking," said Peter, surlily, and not able to conquer his desire to rush forward.

"Come, Peter, there is no time for argument," said I; "down with the boughs — Joas must know best what is to be done in this extremity;" and in a few minutes we were each armed with a good-sized leafy bough. Then the wind blew in our faces, of course bringing towards us still more rapidly the advancing flames. There was this advantage, however, that the same wind retarded the advance of the flames in our rear. But it blew in fitful gusts. Thus, whenever a lull took place, we rushed forward, and beating the flames with our boughs, impeded their progress.

Still, still the flames made upon us, and with their advance, hope receded. "Stay!" I exclaimed suddenly, as a notion passed through my mind; "if we could but light a counter fire here we might clear a space, so that the advancing and receding flames would not meet."

"Aito, it is a wild and impossible notion. I fear we are lost. There is but one chance left."

"What?"

"To make a dash down the hill"

"By the powers, it's my own notion after all!" cried Peter.

But Providence was on our side. The wind, that had hastened the advance of the flames, had been, as it is termed, blowing up for rain; and the rain came, as it alone comes in those regions, without any premonitory symptoms. The lurid blaze of lightning flashed across the darkened horizon. The thunder boomed through the heavens like minute guns, and the rain fell—not in drops—not in showers—but as if the clouds had been one vast reservoir, and had released its contents to fall at once and *en masse* upon the earth. Little recked we the rain, for it had vanquished the fire demon; but onwards, onwards, grateful to the pitiless storm that was beating in our faces and drenching us, till we had descended the hill. But then a difficulty stood in the way. In which direction were we to turn? for Joas candidly admitted that he had lost his reckoning. In the very confusion of despair of our reaching our tent again, I was silly enough to propose that we should toss up an English shilling I had in my pocket—if man, to turn to the right; if woman, to the left—and this too in that pitiless storm! But Joas rebuked me.

"No, Aito," said he; "chance is the fool's providence. Let us rather rest as we are, until the tempest has subsided and the moon shines again."

"Bedad, your honor," said Peter, "but Mr. Joas is right, for two wets through intirely isn't a bit worse than one."

Accordingly, we braved the storm, and were rewarded for our trouble (I thought by that very chance which Joas had snubbed), by traversing a ravine that, curiously

enough, led us into the very track from which we had been driven by the savage blacks.

Now, by the bright moonlight, we could retrace our steps easily, and in a short time came in sight of our tent—but the tent alone! Neither camel, mules, or camel-driver were to be seen. Our astonishment may be better imagined than described.

"The nigger has made off with bag and baggage!" said Peter.

"No, Aito," replied Joas, picking up an arrow, "the camel-driver is not to be blamed. The Gallas have been here; *they* are the thieves."

"The powder and bullets gone!" I exclaimed in despair. "Had they left the ammunition, I would have forgiven them."

"Then, Master Ned, you'll be the best friend in the world with the thieves; for, for fear of an accident, I buried the box of ammunition at the foot of the tree yonder!"

"Do you really mean that?" said I, in delighted surprise. "Why, what a wise old head that is of yours, Peter!"

"Mean it, your honor?—of course I do. Is it likely an old soldier would leave a box of the best powder that ever came from Pignon and Wilks's above ground in a savage country, seeing he'd no better locker to keep it safe from the rain, and may be, as it has proved, from thieves?" Then quitting us, he returned in a few minutes with the box beneath his arm. At the sight of the powder, now our best friend, I gave a cheer, adding, "Bravo, Peter! we are not so badly off as I anticipated; we shall only have to *tramp* to Adoua. As for provisions, it will be hard, indeed, if with three guns, a revolver, hunting-knives, and

plenty of ammunition, we can't kill sufficient game to keep us alive on the road." So, like an old traveller, I made the best of a sad mishap, and with my companions stretched myself upon the ground, and slept sounder, I believe, than I have ever since slept upon a bed of down.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TERRIBLE BOUDA.

MUCH refreshed by our long sleep, yet with stiffened limbs, we set out upon the tramp, agreeing to take it by turns to carry the ammunition box. Peter taking first turn, we secured it to his back by means of some cord — a portion of our baggage, by the way, that the blacks had left behind. Respecting this Peter observed:

"It's a jewel only next in value to the ammunition; for, by the powers, I'll make it long enough and strong enough to hang with it the first of the thieves we come across!"

"First catch your thief, Peter; then talk about hanging him," said I.

"Bedad, I've such a longing to teach the blackguards better manners, that I'd like to hang 'em first and catch 'em after. Good luck to us, Master Ned," he exclaimed, suddenly, "if there isn't the white pony!"

True enough, the animal stood at a little distance, quietly grazing off the long grass.

"By Jove," said I, "this is a godsend, at any rate, if only to carry the ammunition and any stock game we may knock over by the way!" And running forward, we easily caught the docile creature, wondering only for what reason the thieves had let it escape.

Having transferred the pack from Peter to the animal's

back, we continued our journey, stopping only once to kill a guinea-fowl, and roast it over a hole in the ground, which we filled with fire, and to gather wild fruit. After this meal, as we jogged onwards, with our eyes open, and our ears quickened to the slightest sound, Joas, pointing to a high mountain in the distance, explained to us that upon the summit was a castle, which, for centuries, had been used for the *honorable* imprisonment of princes of the blood, heirs to the throne.

"The crown," said he, "being hereditary in one family, but elective in the person, and polygamy being permitted, multiplies these heirs to such an extent that civil wars became common. To avoid the consequent anarchy and effusion of royal blood, the younger princes were confined in yon castle, and maintained at the public expense. They were taught to read and write, but nothing else; seven hundred and fifty cloths for wrapping round them, and three thousand ounces of gold, were allowed for their maintenance. In troublesome times, however, these princes were often put to death upon the smallest misinformation, and their revenues were so pilfered or misapplied by their keepers that many of them died of cold and starvation."

"It's a kind of ondacent tratement the pigs in Ireland (bless 'em!) don't get," said Peter.

"Stay, Aito! — see yonder!" exclaimed Joas, at this moment pointing to certain objects at a distance of about a hundred yards.

It was now near sundown, and the sky was overcast, so that we could not see very clearly; however, the objects pointed at appeared to me to be stumps of trees, and so I told Joas.

"Ay, ay! — it's stumps of trees and stones," said Peter.

"Aito," replied Joas, "there were neither stumps of

trees nor stones on that spot yesterday. No, no! — beware! They are Gallas, who have been observing us for some time, and are now lying ready to spring upon us.”

“Bedad, you are right, Mr. Joas! Look, one of the trees is moving its legs! But maybe it’s asleep, and dreaming, and troubled with nightmare. I’ll wake it up.”

So saying, Peter fired, and billeted a bullet in one of the stones, which shrieked, and then rolled over with a deep groan. Instantly the others, some eight or nine, became transformed into men, and rising to their legs, scampered off into a neighboring copse, unharmed from my fire, which had immediately followed Peter’s.

“Faith,” cried the latter, as he pulled the cord from his pocket, “I’ll trate meself to the hanging of one of the thieves, after all! But look you, Master Ned,” he added, “although all the stones have rolled themselves off, the big stump of the tree’s left behind.”

“As much a tree stump as the others were stones. Beware, Aito, how you approach!” said Joas. So, warily and keenly watching, and with finger on the trigger, so as to fire at the slightest movement, we advanced.

“It does not move,” said I, as we got nearer.

“No, but it squeaks; and see, your honor, it kicks! Bedad, I have it,” he added, “it’s a pair of live pigs, in a sack, that the thieves have been stealing!”

Getting still nearer, it was obvious that it was a sack, and, moreover, contained something alive.

“Cautiously, Aito!” cried Joas; “the Gallas are artful: they desire revenge for their last night’s defeat. There may be a woman or a boy in that sack, which, perhaps, only covers a hole in the ground, wherein lies another or two with poisoned spears.”

“Better then,” said I, “rid ourselves of all doubt;” and

Peter and I darting forward, we the next minute stood by the side of the sack. Opening the mouth, Peter literally shouted with laughter.

"By the powers!" he exclaimed, "it is a queer country — stones turn into men, and sucking pigs into babbies! See, your honor, here's a couple of the darlints!"

"*Babies!*" I repeated.

"Ay, real live babbies, your honor! Look at 'em!" he replied; adding, as he took two infants out of the sack, "there isn't three of 'em, or then there'd be just one apiece for us."

"Two infants in a sack!" I said. "Is it the fashion for the Gallas to carry their offspring with them in this fashion, and, coward-like, to desert them in the moment of danger?"

"No, Aito," replied Joas. Then addressing the wounded Galla, who was writhing in agony upon the ground, he questioned him about the children.

"What says the thief? — are they his children?" asked Peter.

"No, Aito," replied Joas; adding, with a look of horror, "these children have been stolen from a village on the river Mareb by those men, who were taking them to their chief."

"The benevolent ould gintleman! but maybe he hasn't any children of his own?" said Peter.

"They were to be slain and made into medicine for the benefit of the health of the chief, who is very ill."

"Oncredible! Ugh, the cannibals! Where is me rope?" cried Peter, who certainly but for my interference would there and then have put an end to the wounded savage.

"No, no, Peter," said I; "leave the wretch to his com-

rades, who will doubtlessly come to his rescue when we have left. But, in the meantime, let us make all haste, for it is possible the others may have gone to fetch a reinforcement."

"Mayhap then your honor will carry one of the babbies, — for what'll I do wid the two?"

"No, no, Peter, they are evidently twins, and must not be parted."

"If it's orders, it's orders," cried Peter, ruefully, taking the children, one in each arm; adding, "and is it meself that'll be troubled with twins at my time of life?"

"So, then, Joas," said I, as we journeyed onwards, "some of your countrymen are cannibals."

"Aito, no," he replied; "although in many instances they are but little better." And by way of illustration he related several current stories. One of

A great lady of the capital, who, it was said, used either the blood or flesh of young children as medicine for a certain complaint from which she was suffering. Several children had been missing from time to time, but so cleverly had they been kidnapped that suspicion only could suggest what had been their fate. At length a soldier of some note, living near to the house of this lady, missed his daughter, a little girl about six years old. He had last seen her playing with some other children, and on inquiring of them, found that she had been enticed away into the suspected house.

In his love for the child, forgetting the influence of the proprietress, who was a member of the greatest family in the land, the father burst open the door, and, rushing in, drew his sword, threatening the females whom he met that he would kill them if his child were not produced. After a time the girl was brought to him from an inner room.

The woman who restored her declared that she had strayed in of her own accord, and affected great astonishment at his haste and passion, asking what he feared for the girl. The poor child, however, in tears and the greatest alarm, declared that she had been hung up by the legs. The people of the country assert that the object of the hanging was to collect the blood, which was intended to be used medicinally.

"Some people," writes a modern Abyssinian traveller, "state that the flesh of these little victims is not eaten itself by the patient, but is used as food for sheep, whose flesh thus fattened becomes medicinal. The accounts of the manner in which this herbivorous animal is induced to partake of such unnatural diet are two, — some say that the flesh is dried and powdered, and then mixed with the sheep's ordinary food; while others say that the poor creatures are crammed with human flesh as we cram turkeys.

"As regards the truth of these stories, of course no one can vouch for it; but of the *probability* of such extraordinary remedies being employed, and even considered efficacious, I cannot doubt, having myself witnessed many practices equally absurd. I believe there is no question that in some parts of Abyssinia (Walkayt and Waldabba) the flesh of men slain in battle is preserved, dried, and powdered, to be used in cases of sores; and I have heard that if during an interval when no battles have occurred there should arise a scarcity of the article, a bit or two may be occasionally procured from the tomb of some one who has died a natural death.

"A man of my acquaintance, and on whose word I should be inclined to place confidence, told me that when quite a boy he had lived at Waldabba, and that while there

his friends had always forbidden his straying far from the houses about the season of St. John's day. This anniversary is the great day for the casting out of devils, and curing diseases otherwise incurable."

It was curious enough to see Peter, with his rifle slung across his back, and a chubby, dingy-hued child on each arm, trudge, trudge at the head of the white pony. Upon the whole, however, he made a good and uncomplaining nurse; for at night he fed them with mashed fruit and wild honey, and having put them to bed upon the ground and covered them with leaves, after the fashion of the babes of the wood, he stretched himself by their side.

Early the next morning, however, he was released from his duties; for, coming to the banks of a great river, we fell in with the mother and father of the children. They had been hopelessly searching for their offspring in the wilds, but so strangely finding them, I thought they would have gone mad with delight, so long did they continue to caper and shout, every now and then falling on their knees and kissing Peter's feet. It was fortunate also for ourselves that we had met with these people, for they told us they were inhabitants of a village some three or four miles off, on the banks of the river, to which place they would conduct us, and procure for us whatever we might require for the further prosecution of our journey.

Following the course of the river, we saw evidences of the danger of travelling that way by night; for in the sand, near the deeper parts, were traces of almost every species of animal—from the elephant, lion, and buffalo, to the tiny hoof-prints of the smaller variety of gazelle, and so numerous, too, that it would appear as if they had been driven down in herds. There also were to be seen the trails of reptiles, from the boa constrictor to the smallest

viper. Indeed, as Peter observed, "It must have been a mighty unpleasant place for a midnight stroll!"

Further up the stream we came up with some men catching fish. This they did by damming up the tributary rivulets, and poisoning the water, when the fish, being ill, turn upon their backs, and are easily caught. An unsportsmanlike method, to be sure, but then a very successful one; and, to people who go fishing for food, this is of the greatest importance. I have told you of the terrors of travelling by this river at night; it is therefore but fair, then, I should add, that by day it is, with the exception perhaps of the great heat, agreeable in the extreme; the huge mountains in the distance, from which swoop down eagles and hawks of every variety, seeking their prey among the beautiful sun-birds, parrots, and long-tailed paroquets, which are flitting by thousands about the sweet-scented blossoms of the mimosas.

During the dry season, when, with the exception of a small clear stream running through the middle, the river is dried up, a curious fish is caught in the hollows, called the *garmont*. It is black, and with fins like those of an eel, while from its jaws hang six long strings like a beard.

In size, it sometimes reaches to a weight of eighty pounds. It has also the peculiarity of some of the remarkable fishes of Ceylon; namely, of hiding itself in the mud during the dry season. For instance, Mr. Parkyns tells us:

"I was not a little surprised, after only a few days' rain, to see that a hollow place in my garden, which in the rainy season becomes a pond, contained a great number of *garmont*. On inquiring of the natives, they told me that the fish had probably remained alive for several months, during the whole dry season, caked up in the mud, which,

after the water leaves it, in a few days becomes hard like a brick."

Soon after quitting the fisherman we encountered a tall, muscular man, carrying in one hand a large hammer, and in the other some pieces of iron-work : what it was I could not see. As soon as this personage came near, say within a dozen yards of us, the worthy couple who had found their lost children, stopped and saluted him ; nay, even Joas did the same. Scarcely recognizing the salutation, however, the man passed onwards.

"Who is that black-looking rascal?" said I to Joas.

"*Bouda*," he whispered, I thought a little nervously.

"*Bouda, bouda!*" echoed the native man and woman, with shivering limbs and chattering teeth.

"Booder, who's Booder? what's Booder? is that black chap Booder?" asked Peter, laughing.

"Aito, yes — *bouda*," replied Joas.

"But, look you, Mr. Joas, instead of crying 'Booder, Booder,' can't ye be after telling us why the sight of Mr. Booder, if so be Booder is his name, should make these two people here tremble and turn pale as ghosts — at least, as nigger ghosts? The chap," he added, "to me looks more like a blacksmith than anything else; if one may judge by the hammer on his shoulder and the iron in his hand."

"He is a blacksmith, but he is *bouda*," replied Joas.

"Botheration to your Booder, Mr. Joas; can't you tell us what Booder means?"

Joas explained.

"Blacksmiths in Abyssinia (the trade, by the way, is hereditary, as, in fact, it is among the Burmese and other Asiatics) are regarded with awe; for they are all *boudas*. Now, a *bouda* is a man in immediate connection with the

devil; that is, a sorcerer, who has the power of changing himself into any animal; the form, however, he chiefly prefers, is that of the hyena."

"Can the hyenas change themselves into blacksmiths? Then, by the powers, I don't think they'd much improved their beauty by the alteration, if the chap who has just passed is a specimen!" said Peter. But, not noticing the interruption, Joas continued:

"The *bouda's* power is held by my countrymen to be terrible. At times he will take possession of the soul,—that is, cause his own spirit to enter the body in place of the natural soul; at another he will subject persons to horrible tortures, sometimes even causing their death. But, worse than all, the *bouda* invariably chooses as his victims the young, the beautiful, and clever—chiefly females."

"Now, Mister Joas, do you, a Christian, believe all this nonsense? Bedad, I'll fall in love directly with every Booder I meet, regarding him as a much-to-be-pitied poor devil, as were the witches in England a long time ago."

"I do not; but the force of habit, and the terrible things I have witnessed, cause me even now to tremble at the sight of a blacksmith."

Then, as we walked leisurely along, he told us a story of

HOW TWO GIRLS WERE PUNISHED FOR DISBELIEF IN THE
BOUDA.

"One day, two girls who had been out in the forest to gather sticks, came running back breathless with fright, and on being asked what was the cause, they answered that a blacksmith of the neighborhood had met them. Entering into conversation with him, they at length began

to joke him about whether, as had been asserted, he could *really* turn himself into a hyena. The man, they declared, made no reply; but taking some ashes, which he had with him tied up in the corner of his cloth, sprinkled them over his shoulders, and to their horror and alarm, they began almost immediately to perceive that the metamorphosis was actually taking place, and that the blacksmith's skin was assuming the hair and color of the hyena, while his limbs and head took the shape of that animal. When the change was complete, he grinned and laughed at them, and then retired into the neighboring thickets. They had remained, as it were, rooted to the place from sheer fright; but the moment the hideous creature withdrew, they made the best of their way home."

"Now, look ye, Mr. Joas, I don't believe a word of it. At all events, if those girls had been mine, I'd a punished 'em for spinning a yarn only just to account for the time they had wasted in playing while out on their errands."

"But," continued Joas, not noticing Peter's remarks, "the *boudas* do not always use their power for mischief. Sometimes they turn it to a profitable account, as you will see by a story I will tell you of

THE CUNNING OF TWO BOUDA BROTHERS.

"One of these having submitted to be turned into a horse, ass, or cow, was sold by his brother at the market, and conducted by his purchaser out of the town. As soon, however, as night closed the eyes of his new master, the *bouda* resumed his humanity, and walked quietly home. It so often occurred that one or the other of the brothers sold some animal in the market, that people began to inquire whence their cattle were obtained, as they were never

known to keep any stock, nor even to have any beast in their yard till the day of sale arrived ; still more extraordinary in the eyes of the suspicious, was the fact that every animal they sold made its escape the same night, and was never heard of. At last, a soldier, or chief, rather more ingenious than the rest, and probably with his wits sharpened by the fact of his having already been taken in twice, determined to risk his money a third time, in hopes of discovering the fraud ; accordingly, one market-day he bought a very fine-looking animal from one of the brothers, and took it away with him. Instead, however, of allowing him to wait till night should favor his escape, no sooner was he outside the town than he drove his lance through the heart of his new purchase, and returned to the town to watch the effects which the news might produce on the seller. Meeting him, as it were accidentally, he told him (cursing his own heat of temper) how he had in a passion killed the beautiful animal he had just bought of him. The *bouda* started ; but managed to conceal his emotion till he arrived at home ; when, closing the door, he gave vent to his lamentations, wailing and rubbing the skin off his forehead, as is customary at the death of a near relation. On being questioned by the neighbors as to the cause of his grief, he replied that news had reached him of the death of his brother, who, he said, had been robbed and murdered in the Galla country, whither he had gone some few days before in quest of horses."

CHAPTER XXI.

WE HEAR A STRANGE STORY.

Now, the worthy couple for whom, by the merest accident, we had performed so great a service, proved to be tolerably rich for Abyssinian villagers ; that is, they possessed two huts, several servants male and female, six cows, many sheep, and an abundance of clothing, — all of which they told us, not by way of ostentation, but to prove that they had it is their power to show their gratitude for the restoration of their children.

Having reached their house, they ordered their servants to prepare a feast, and sent out invitations to several of their friends and neighbors to come and meet the distinguished white men who had been the means of bringing back happiness to their house.

In all, about twenty of us sat down, the servants standing behind the visitors. The eating being finished as usual, the drinking began, and at the same time a general conversation about the *bouda*.

More strange was the effect of the news that we had met a blacksmith on our way to the village, upon one of the female servants. She held her head in her hands, tottered stupidly against the wall of the hut, and began to cry.

"The *bouda* ! the *bouda* !" cried the company, starting up. But as the girl seemed suddenly better, they again

sat down to their potations. Now, Peter and I laughing sceptically at this little incident, the host rather angrily asked :

"Have the white Aitoes no *bouda* in their country?"

I must admit that, remembering the foolish mania of some of my countrymen and women for table-turning and spirit-rapping, — their belief in jumping tables, walking chairs, dancing sofas, and self-playing pianos, — I felt rebuked by this son of the wilderness for my contempt for his superstition; nevertheless, I answered in the negative.

"*Wa!*" he replied; "then the white Aitoes are most fortunate; for they are so common in the land of Habesh, not a year passes but numbers are burned to death by order of the Prince of Tigré."

"When," I replied, "the white people of my country were in darkness, they believed in *boudas*, whom they called witches, and the white kings used to burn them to death; but Heaven has removed the films of ignorance which darkened their eyes and hardened their hearts, as it will some day the people of this land."

"The Evil Spirit, then," he replied, "has no power among the white people. In Habesh he is all strong. He gives the *boudas* great power." Then, by way of attempting to cure my scepticism, he told us the story of

THE WOMAN WITH THE DONKEY'S FOOT.

"The woman, Aito," he began, "was my poor mother. She had died, and was buried, — nay so long a time had passed, that, although her family had not ceased to mourn, the keen edge of grief had become blunted, — when, one day, a stranger passing through the village, riding a very fine donkey, stopped at my house for a gourd of fresh milk.

Of course he left the donkey at the door while he entered the house; but the animal seeing me at the door, brayed, and ran towards me. Now, believing that the animal was but unruly, I beat it with a stick, and took no more notice of it. But again and again the stranger passed through the village, and each time, when near my door, the donkey brayed, kicked, and moaned. So one day, instead of beating her, I caressed the animal, when she rubbed her nose affectionately against my cheek, and the tears rolled down her face. Then a thought coming into my mind, I asked the man what calling he followed.

“‘That of a blacksmith,” he replied.

“‘Then, O thou villain!’ I cried, ‘that ass is my mother!’”

“Mighty disobedient of him to call his own mother by such a name!” muttered Peter.

“The rogue,” continued our host, “at first laughed at me, denying the charge; but, calling my brother to my aid, we threatened to burn him alive; at the same time promising, that if he would restore our parent to her human form, we would let him depart harmless.

“Then, Aitô, he confessed that, by bribing the priest who had buried our mother, he had disinterred the body, and by his hateful art changed it into a live donkey — that is, as far as form went: over the mind and human feelings he possessed no power. Well, the *bouda* began to re-transform our parent, and when she had become, as we believed, complete, so delighted was my brother with the sight, yet so indignant against the *bouda*, that he struck him dead with his spear. Sadly, however, did we suffer for this impatience. The incantation not being entirely completed, one foot remained asinine, and continued so till her death.”

"Which was a happy release for her bootmaker, poor man, who must have been bothered a good deal with that hoof!" muttered Peter.

Friend reader, were you ever at a boy's party during the telling of a round of ghost stories, at the breaking up of which you have retired to your room or gone home predisposed to meet a spectre at every turn, escaping at length by diving deep beneath the bedclothes, fortunate, even then, if hideous faces did not grinningly keep you awake, with eyeballs glaring like hot coals, and at last only permit you to sleep that they might fuse themselves into a still more hideous nightmare, who would sit upon your chest, nose and knees together, mocking you at every attempt to call for aid? If so you will have a fair notion of the state of mind of my Abyssinian fellow-visitors, when, after listening to a whole round of *bouda* stories, they took their departure. The effect, however upon the female servant, of whom I have spoken, was still more plainly visible. Half an hour after the departure of the company, she burst out into a hysterical laughter.

"The *bouda! bouda!*" cried all the natives present; and while one ran to fetch an exorcist, the others threw her upon the ground. For a few minutes she remained in a state of lethargy. To revive her they pinched her, but not a muscle moved. In a few minutes more she tried to bite, kick, and tear every one within her reach, but being foiled in this, she convulsively grasped at the floor, and, in imitation of the hyena, gave forth most terrible screams. She held her thumbs tightly bent inside her hands, as if to prevent their being seen.

"Open her hands! fetch cold water!" I cried; for I had repeatedly seen cases of hysterics.

"It is impossible to straighten her thumbs. They are

the *bouda's* own perquisite. He will allow no person to take them," said our host.

Notwithstanding, I made the effort, and received several bites for my pains.

"Here is a talisman!" cried one, laying a small bag of something—I knew not what—upon her mouth. At this she bit vehemently, and cried:

"It is weak, and will not hurt *him!*" meaning the *bouda* within.

Then came the water, and we deluged her with it; but all to no purpose.

At length came the exorcist, a miserable-looking old wretch, at whose very footsteps she started and struggled the harder to get away. But the old man, disregarding her entreaties and lamentations, her fits of unnatural gayety and bursts of thrilling anguish, with one hand laid an amulet on her heaving bosom, whilst with the other he made her smell a rag, in which the root of a strong-scented plant, a bone of a hyena, and some other abominable unguents were bound up. The mad rage of the possessed creature being instantaneously hushed by this operation, the exorcist addressed himself to the *bouda*, when the following conversation took place,—the *bouda*, be it understood, using the suffering woman as his medium:

Exorcist. "Where do you live?"

Bouda. "In Tigré."

Exorcist. "What is the name of your confessor?"

Bouda. "Bavim."

Exorcist. "Why did you come here?"

Bouda. "To take possession of this woman."

Exorcist. "How many persons have you already killed?"

Bouda. "Six."

Exorcist. "I command thee, in the name of the Blessed

Trinity, the twelve Apostles, and the three hundred and eighteen Bishops at the Council of Nicæa, to leave this woman, and never more to molest her!"

This command, however, the *bouda* seemed disposed to treat with contempt; but the exorcist then threatening to treat him with a dinner of burning coals, the naughty demon became less refractory, and, in a sulky tone, promised to obey. Still anxious, however, to delay his going as long as possible, he demanded something to eat, naming his own choice.

"Ugh, the dirty baste!" cried Peter; and well he might, for it consisted of filth and dirt of the most revolting description, together with an admixture of water. This choice repast, however, was speedily prepared by the other servants, and brought to the exorcist in an earthen dish. Placing this near the woman, the old fellow said in solemn tones;

"As thy father did, so do thou."

"Bedad, the dirty creature's going to eat it!", cried Peter.

It was true. The words had scarcely left the old man's lips, when the *possessed* woman, leaping up, and crawling on all fours, sought the dainty dish, which she lapped with a sickening avidity and greediness. She now laid hold of a stone, which three strong men could scarcely lift, and, raising it aloft in the air, whirled it madly round her head for two seconds, and then fell senseless on the ground. In half an hour she revived, but was quite unconscious of what had transpired.

But, lest my readers should hold their breath with wonder, and perhaps disbelief, let me tell them that the Rev. Herny A. Stern, in his most admirable book, "Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia," describes a very

similar scene. The same gentleman, accounting for this curious malady, which Abyssinian credulity ascribes to the direct possession of the Evil One, says, "It may be traced to far more natural causes than those assigned by the natives. The very persons most subject to the *bouda* influence are in themselves a proof that, however puzzling the cure may be, there is no mystery about the origin of the disease. Among the numerous cases which came under my own notice, I ascertained that the sufferers invariably had either been afflicted with a disordered imagination, or shaken by much excitement or depression in their nervous system.

"The more intelligent natives admit that the sober, moral, and virtuous of both sexes enjoy immunity from the demon's power; whilst, on the contrary, those who indulge in morbid fancies, luxuriate in sinful indulgences, and riot in dissolute habits, are seldom, if ever, entirely free from the fear of a sudden attack.

"Next in importance to the *bouda* is the *zar*. This malady is exclusively confined to unmarried women, and has this peculiar feature, that, during the violence of the paroxysm, it prompts the patient to imitate the sharp, discordant growl of the leopard. I recollect that the first time I saw a case of this description it gave me a shock which made my blood run cold. The sufferer was a handsome, gay, and lively girl, a little above fifteen. In the morning she was engaged as usual in her work, when a quarrel ensued between her and other domestics. The fierce dispute, though of a trifling character, roused the passions of the fiery Ethiopian to such a pitch that it brought on a hysterical affection. The natives all cried, 'She is possessed;' and certainly her ghastly smile, nervous tremor, wild stare, and unnatural howl, justified the notion.

"To expel the *zar*, a conjurer, as in the *bouda* complaint, was formerly considered indispensable; but, by dint of perseverance, the medical faculty of the country, to their infinite satisfaction, have at length made the happy discovery, that a sound application of the whip is quite as potent an antidote against this evil as the necromancer's spell. Neither in the above, nor in any other instance that occurred among our own people, had we recourse to this remedy; but instead of it, we made the patient inhale strong spirit of ammonia; and if this failed, we left her to herself, and in a day or two she would again recover her impaired senses and wonted health. In bringing this demoniacal subject to a close, I am forcibly reminded of the words, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' That there is something in these diseases, and their mode of cure, which transcends ordinary disorders, no one who has stood beside a frantic and agonized patient, and wondered at the sudden and more than dramatic transition from raving frenzy to child-like docility, can well deny. But without deciding whether it is epilepsy, catalepsy, or hysteria, I am quite sure that fiends and spirits have less to do with the matter than the irregular life and dissolute course which so many pursue."

CHAPTER XXII.

A SHARP FIGHT WITH THE BLACKS, AND ITS RESULTS.

BEING supplied by our grateful hosts with a mule each, a plentiful supply of provisions, and water, we crossed the river on a large raft, and I have no doubt set the mouths of several huge crocodiles watering, and disturbed the repose of a cow hippopotamus and her calf, who, after a long night's paddle on the sands, were indulging in a snooze, with their snouts just above water. Landing at the other side, we mounted, and again set out for Adowa, our road being through a wild, rocky, and mountainous country; the valleys of which were covered with wood and jungle.

Two days we travelled without meeting with any incident of note, save that we killed more game than we could eat. The third night we sought shelter in a house, or rather cavern, hewn out of the rocky side of a hill. There were several other huts of the same description, one of which, Joas told us, was celebrated for containing some half a dozen petrified youth; the legend being, that going there to carouse unlawfully, they had been suddenly changed into stone for their sins. Of course we did not believe it, notwithstanding Joas declared that at that present time they were to be seen if we could only discover the right spot.

"If pigs had wings they'd fly," remarked Peter, impudently; and in all probability, like that worthy, my read-

ers no more believe in the petrified youths than they do in that account of the wonderful city in the "Arabian Nights," wherein a certain prince found all the inhabitants turned to stone. For my own part, I believe that there is a substratum of truth running through the whole of that marvellous book. *Apropos* of petrified cities, what will my readers think of the following paragraph that appeared in a London newspaper, in November of the year 1728 :

"Cassam Aga, the present Envoy of Tripoli to his Britannic Majesty, having received an account of the discovery of a petrified town in Africa, where the inhabitants, cattle, trees, and everything are turned into stone, it was given to the interpreter to his Majesty for the Oriental languages, who has translated it from the Arabic of the Envoy's own handwriting into French, which in English, is as follows :

"PRAISE TO GOD ALONE.

"A friend of mine having desired me to tell him in writing what I have heard concerning the petrified town, I shall give a relation thereof, as I had it from several persons and particularly from one man of credit, who went on the spot purposely to satisfy himself concerning the truth of it, and the account he gives is as follows :

"That the town lies two days' journey south from Onguela, which is distant from Tripoli, S. E., seventeen days' march with the caravan. When he came to the town — which is large and of an orbicular form, wherein are several spacious as well as narrow streets, full of shops, and defended by a very large and magnificent castle — he saw many petrified trees, in and about the town, most of them olives and palms, but all turned into stone of a blue or ash color. The inhabitants are also petrified — the men whilst

following their several occupations, some with stuffs or silks in their hands, others with bread; in short, all of them in some action, and the women with their infants at the breast, all turned into stone. That he entered the castle by three different gates, but that there are more; that he saw in the castle a man petrified, lying on a bed of stone, as were the very sentinels standing at the gates, with their pikes and javelins in their hands; that he also saw several sorts of animals, such as camels, oxen, horses, asses, sheep, and birds, all turned into stone of the color above mentioned."

Quitting the cavern as usual about daybreak, we directed our steps towards a mountain, the ascent of which proved the most dangerous portion of our journey. On all sides were dark and gloomy precipices, to avoid which we had to strain every nerve, as a false step would have hurled us into the ravines below. Now we had to creep through a rocky cleft, along whose furrowed sides the hail leaped in foaming cascades; and now, again, with hands and feet firmly fixed in the crumbling soil, we crept cautiously on all fours up a tortuous and shelving pathway, leading our sure-footed mules and the equally cautious white pony. At length, weary, sore-footed, we reached a densely-wooded table-land, when another danger presented itself.

"The Barea are prowling somewhere in this neighborhood!" cried Joas.

"Niver heard of the gentlemen! — who are they?" asked Peter.

"A race of savage blacks who exist by the plunder of travellers. See, here are their fire-holes," and he pointed to the ground. "The rogues," he added, "come during the night near a spot where they expect travellers will

pass. Each man digs a hole for himself. In this he lights a fire, which he keeps alive by occasionally fanning it with his shield, and over which he squats, keeping his cloth spread all around him, to prevent the glare being seen. Thus every man is warm; and there is no danger of their being discovered, as would be the case if large fires were lighted."

"By the powers, then, we had better look to our arms!" said Peter. "But," he added, "at all events there's none of the gentry about here just now."

"Aito, they are cunning; they have spies everywhere; and even now are lurking among the bushes. See!" and he pointed out foot-prints on the earth. "However," he added, "they will scarcely venture to attack us if we show a bold front, without, indeed, they happen to be in large numbers."

"Well, well, Joas," I said, "we had better be prepared, and begin by refreshing ourselves, as it wont do to fight on empty stomachs." Accordingly, we made a fire-hole, over which we stewed a guinea-fowl, and having thus satisfied our appetites, we remounted our mules, and making the best use of ears and eyes, moved forward. A few hundred yards further, and there were proofs indubitable of the thieves having been there, — leaves and grass, which they had put on stones to sit upon, a broken gourd, and numerous footprints in the sand.

"They have seen our approach; they have taken up a position — perhaps in yon bush," said Joas.

We then held a whispered council of war. To go forward, might be to fall into an ambush, or to be shot to death by arrows from unseen hands. It was a dilemma. What should we do? A voice in the bush decided the question: bring the rogues forward, and fight it out.

"Reserve fire!" I cried to Joas and Peter, and at the same moment I sent a bullet whistling through the trees.

"By the powers, the cratur's mane business!" cried Peter, as, in answer to my fire, half a hundred hideous blacks started up with a shout, and sent forth a volley of stones, several of which hitting Peter knocked him off his mule.

"Are you hurt?" I cried, wheeling my animal so as to cover the, I feared, sadly wounded man. I did not, however, hear the reply; for, in rapid succession, I had discharged my revolver three times.

The rapidity of these shots from a single weapon dismayed the enemy, and they stood at bay; only, however, for a minute, when, led by a powerfully-built man, who rode a fierce little horse, they dashed towards us with their gleaming two-edged broadswords.

This time we received them with a volley, Joas even firing this time.

"Bedad!" cried Peter, who saw there was no time to re-load, "I'll trate the divils to a bit of the butt!" and, dashing forward, handling the rifle as if it had been a lance he laid about him to the right, to the left, to the front, to the rear, manfully, laying one after the other prostrate; and after a similar manner, with equal courage but less skill, did Joas fight.

"Master Ned! Master Ned!" suddenly called out Peter, "fire at the devil, or he'll cut me throat!" for while two blacks held him by the arms, another was slowly and deliberately about to draw his weapon across his throat; but a bullet stretched the fellow on the earth, dead or badly wounded; and Peter, darting from his affrighted captors, was again at my side. Then Joas and I, mounted, *Peter on foot*, fought hard against the foe with our rifles,

club-fashion. The blacks yelled with delight, believing we had no more ammunition; but they were mistaken. I had reserved one ball, which I fired at one of the most forward.

"Hurrah!" cried Peter, as the enemy fell back, a little surprised, "now let us retreat to yonder trees." As, however, I rode forward, Peter cried again, "Beware, Master Ned: the mounted devil's behind!" Wheeling round to meet my enemy front to front, I saw the huge black, his terrible sword whirling in the air. There was but one means of escaping the blow. I had seen it done in India. Hastily pulling up the mule upon its haunches, I slid off, but in the very nick of time, for the animal's head received the blow aimed at me, and was severed clean at the neck. This escape, however, would have proved temporary indeed, — for a party of the blacks had seized me from behind, and I believe their leader would then and there have despatched me, — but, at the moment, his eye fell upon the little white pony. The effect was magical upon all, though mostly upon the chief, who now, as quiet as he had hitherto been wild and boisterous, dismounted, and going up to the little animal, caressed it, and having apologized for not having seen him sooner, he commanded the men to tie us all three to a tree. At this command, they led us through the bush into a clearing of about half an acre; crossing this space, they led us to a tree in the bush on the other side. Then, having bound us securely to a tree, the chief apologized for this rough treatment, but assured us that, at least for the present, our lives were safe, and that he and his men were then going to inform their prince, a great chief, of our happy arrival in that country with the white horse.

"It's a pity the black gentleman didn't see the horse a

little sooner: it would have saved *him* a deal of trouble, and the lives of a few of his imps!" said Peter, when the party had left.

"It is a queer affair altogether: I can't understand it," I replied. "It is evident, however, that the kind old chief knew the value the animal might be to us."

"True, Aito," said Joas; "these Barea are under some very great obligation to that chief, and have sworn to respect his signet."

"*Signet!*" cried Peter; "and is it a queer little bit of a white pony you call a signet in your country?"

"What matters, you booby of a Peter, so long as it answers the same purpose?" said I; adding, "but if this horse be potent enough to save our lives, how is it they have tied us up to this tree?"

"Aito," replied Joas, "be not too sure that our lives *will* be saved. Had the Barea noticed the white horse at first, they would have permitted us to pass through their country unharmed, unhurt; but unfortunately they *have* attacked us, we have resisted, and slain several of their people; thus, the leader of the party dares not permit us to pass onwards, for their law cries, 'Blood for blood' — the Mosaic law — 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'"

"Bad luck to the niggers!" suddenly cried Peter, "but they've tied the cord across me favorite bunion. How's your honor? Shure they haven't tied ye across your wound, have they? Och! get out wid ye, ye baste!" he added, spasmodically.

Now, as I was secured upon the opposite side of the tree, and could therefore not see the cause of the latter cry, I said, "What's the matter, Peter?"

"*What's the matter?*" he repeated, indignantly, "shure,

then, it's a couple of bastes of flies playing leapfrog on the tip of me nose, and I can't help meself."

"Never mind, old Peter," said I, laughing; "you must bear it like a man; it's only a trifle!"

"A thriflé!—ugh, get out wid ye!—a thrifle does your honor call it, to have a pair of dirty insects a tickling the very outpost of me nose, and widout even a tail like a cow to whisk 'em off?"

"Come, come, Peter!—make the best of a bad affair."

"To be shure I will, your honor; and just consider only that the situation's good for me morals, and that I'm out of the way of temptation; at least as far as picking and stealing goes. But look you, Mr. Joas, if so be they haven't choked you with the cords, will you just tell me a little about these bastes of Barriers? Faith, they're well called, since they have stopped us from going any further!"

"They are natives of the north of Tigré."

"Tiger!" repeated Peter, interrupting him; "it's a wild baste of a name."

"Hush!" I said, as I heard approaching footsteps; "the Barea are returning already;" and straining my eyes to look through the brushwood and bramble, I could see coming across the cleared space an armed warrior and his page or shield-bearer.

"It is the villain who decoyed away the good Doctor and Esther," whispered Joas.

"It is fortunate," said I; "he will release us."

"No, no! for Heaven's sake make not a single movement, or the rascal will slay us! We are at his mercy!"

"But look at the fiendish expression in his eyes. He means no good to the poor youth, his page," he added, as the Abyssinian, taking the youth by the arm, led him for-

ward to within a few yards of the trees to which we were tied. With breathless interest we watched and listened to the following :

Warrior (first brandishing his club and then his spear). "It is two days since we left the army, yet am I still without a trophy to show my prowess. I dare not go back to the prince in disgrace."

Youth. "It is unfortunate, O my master! Still, if we cannot find any of these Barea by themselves, how can we show our prowess?"

Warrior. "That is true, boy; but I dare not appear before the prince without a trophy; and I have hit upon a plan that will serve my purpose, that will make my fortune. You must die!" (As he uttered the last words, he thrust his spear through the boy's body.)

Youth (horrified at the deed, but only slightly wounded). "My master! O my dear master! you will not kill me; I have been your faithful servant from a child, now seven years, during all of which time I have never received nor asked you for any wages except the morsels I have eaten and the rags I have worn. Surely, then, O dear master, you cannot find it in your heart to slay me?"

Warrior (quite coolly and deliberately). "My good lad, you speak the truth; your services have been many and good, but they are not complete. To have served me truly for seven years is greatly to your credit; but it will be still more honorable to your memory that by your death you should be the means of procuring me much renown, and perhaps, who knows, many villages to govern."

As he spoke the last word he struck the boy with his club, and then stabbed him in the neck with his spear; then, thinking the boy dead, stripped him, and cut off a piece of his flesh as a trophy. After this he violently

hacked his shield with his sword, spear, and knife. Then standing with folded arms, and contemplating his work, he soliloquized thus :

"The saints are good to me ; no person will know of this. I have my trophy, and no man can deny my honor. I will now to the prince, and tell how that my boy and I were set upon in the forests by fearful odds, and that after fighting bravely, the poor lad got killed. My arms will show how bravely I have fought."

And to carry out his design this Falstaff of the wilderness stalked away by the same path that he had come.

"The wretch," I murmured, "would that I had had my arms at liberty !"

Now, Peter being tied in an opposite direction had witnessed no part of the scene ; moreover, he had prudently, at Joas's whispered advice, held his tongue during the gallant warrior's fierce battle with his own shield. When, however, the latter had left, and we told him of the murder, he literally roared with agony.

"Och, bad luck !" he cried ; "only to think of three able-bodied Christians being tied, hands, legs, and tongues, to a tree, and murder being committed under their very noses ! The devil fly away wid the Barriers !"

"Hark ! listen ! the Barea are returning. The boy may not be dead ; we may yet save him !" cried Joas.

And, true enough, the leader of the party and several of the men made their appearance ; but now as our *friends*, with their great chief's best wishes, some promises, and his commands to set us at liberty. In their haste to release us they had not noticed the body of the poor youth, not, indeed, till they had cut our cords. Then, with a look of astonishment at the poor fellow, they asked its meaning, and Joas having told them, the chief made a great show

of indignation. He told us, however, that as the army to which the ruffian robber belonged was somewhere in that neighborhood for the purpose of exterminating him and his men, he dared not send in search of the would-be assassin. He did, however, the next best thing — sympathized with the lad, examined his wounds, applied a certain unguent to them, a strong scent to his nostrils, and several pitchers of water to his face. The result was, that the boy, who had fainted from terror and loss of blood, slowly came to his senses, and soon became sufficiently strong to sit on the white pony. The robbers then giving me a mule for the one I had had killed under me, we took leave of them in the full belief that we had discovered another proof that the devil is not so black as he is painted. On the way we learned the following few particulars respecting this black tribe :

“They live to the north of Tigré, are governed by different independent chiefs, and are savage and warlike, subsisting by the chase and the plunder of travellers. Their dress consists *solely* of a small cloth wrapped round the body not more than a third the size of the Abyssinian *quary*. Their arms consist of a shield, two-edged sword, spear, and club. Curiously enough, the swords are all of European make, and are obtained from the caravans which from time to time come from Egypt into the interior of Africa. In religion, if not Pagan, they are Mussulman. They cultivate a kind of coarse corn, called *dokhen*, but they also eat snakes, rats, and lizards.”

“The Barea,” says Mr. Parkyns, “are very brave, strong, active, and hardy, and were they a little more civilized, or were they even to unite in any force, would prove very dangerous enemies to Tigré. Still, however, *I doubt if civilization, unless carried out to its fullest ex-*

tent, improves a savage race in any particular. These fellows are, I believe, not only superior to their more civilized neighbors, whether of the north or south, in animal and physical qualities, but also, from all accounts, are more honest and trustworthy. In regard to any acquaintance with modern improvements in the art of killing their fellow-men they are remarkably wanting; for instance, they fear horsemen very much less than foot soldiers, imagining that the former must be old or infirm men, who, not being able to keep up with their comrades on foot, require to be carried by horses; while, in reality, an Abyssinian who owns a horse must be either a rich man, or a distinguished warrior, whom his chief has rewarded by the gift of one.

"So, in their campaigns, whenever they are met by cavalry, they amuse themselves at their expense by facetiously plucking handfulls of grass, and holding them towards the horses, calling them 'Tish, tish, tish,' etc. They appear never able to understand how the firearms of their adversaries kill them. Occasionally it has been noticed that when a man has fallen by a gunshot wound, his neighbors will assist him up, imagining him to have stumbled; should life be extinct, they manifest their astonishment at finding him dead from some unseen cause; and when, on examining his body, they discover the small round hole made by the ball, they will stare at it, poke their fingers into it, and absolutely laugh with surprise and wonder. One or two guns have been found amongst them, probably taken from hunters on the Mareb, or from some village they may have pillaged; but these were carried as ornaments, for no powder was found with any of them, nor did they appear to consider that at all as a necessary accompaniment to a gun. Notwithstanding all these deficiencies in the art of warfare, one of these sav-

ages in general proves more than a match for two ordinary Abyssinians. To sum all up, I should think that the Barea are, in manners and customs, not unlike some of the wilder Nubian tribes, only about three or four centuries behind them in civilization."

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE FALL IN WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE — DRAMATIC
JUSTICE.

LEAVING the Barea, our order of march was as follows :

Vidette, or *advanced guard* — Joas, who was thrown out some twenty yards to the front, with the barrel of his rifle lying at ease across his mule's neck, ready for immediate use.

Main body — the lieutenant commanding (myself), the wounded lad, and Peter, abreast.

The rear — A sumpter mule, carrying our provisions, and led by a cord attached to Peter's mule.

Thus onwards, over a charming road, hilly it is true, but through hedgerows of jessamine, honeysuckle, and various flowering shrubs, till we reached Adowa, the modern capital of Tigré — a pleasant city, consisting of some five hundred houses, each dwelling being surrounded by trees. A queer kind of place you will say for a manufacturing town, at least if you are thinking of Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham. Nevertheless, it is the seat of a very valuable manufacture; namely, a coarse common cloth, which circulates all over Abyssinia, instead of silver money. Each web is sixteen *peek* long, of one and three fourths width, their value being a *pataka*, or ten webs, to an ounce of gold. The people of Adowa might also reap great wealth by agriculture; for they possess a wonderfully

fertile soil, which with but little trouble produces three harvests annually. Their ignorance, however, of the art of husbandry, the almost continual state of civil war, and the extortionate taxation of the chiefs, keep the farmers miserably poor.

At this city we had intended to stay for a day or two. Hearing, however, that the Viceroy of the province was staying at Axum, we rested but one night, and on the following morning moved on to the latter town, getting a view of mountains of all shapes and sizes: some flat, thin, and square; others like pyramids, obelisks, or prisms; and some pitched upon their points, with their base uppermost. Then we came to the celebrated convent of Fremona, built, and once inhabited, by the Jesuits, but now in a state of ruin. One night we slept amid the ruins of this old building. The next day we reached the plain on which stood a famous city, the ruins of which have interested all travellers; but notably the numerous obelisks — some still standing, others fallen. They are all of one piece of granite, and have hieroglyphics upon the base. From the latter, Bruce believed them to have been the work of Ptolemy Evergetes. The Abyssinians, however, have the following legend respecting these monuments: "When the three sons of Noah separated, each took up his abode in one of the *three* divisions of the world, setting up a pillar in his own division, — Shem in Asia, Japheth in Europe, and Ham in Africa. The pillar of the latter is that at Axum. The common people say that it was made by the devil, as it could not have been the work of a man. Again, the son of Ham had twelve sons in Axum, one of whom was *Ætheops*, the progenitor of the Abyssinians."

Another remarkable feature in these ruins is the large stone church, in all probability originally a Pagan temple,

which, when the country was converted to Christianity, was transformed into a Christian church, by the aid of Greek or Egyptian architects of the Byzantine Empire.

In this sacred building, tradition states, is preserved the ark of the covenant, which Menilek, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, stole, when he returned from Jerusalem to Abyssinia and founded the Solomonian dynasty.

Arrived at the modern town, which is about a mile from the ruins, we were surrounded by soldiers and camp followers,—a noisy set, very inquisitive, and withal very critical as to our eyes, hair, and skin; the first of which they called “cat’s eyes;” the second they compared to monkey’s hair; and the third they declared only fit to make red morocco sword sheaths. As soon, however, as their attention was drawn to the white pony, and, moreover, were told that our mission was to the Prince Viceroy, their manners changed; the mere rabble fell aside, and two officers of rank coming forward, and bowing to me, offered to place two huts at our service for that night, and the next morning to conduct us to the presence of his highness, who was encamped at a short distance upon the other side of the town. These officers walked with us to the huts, by the way lustily beating back the too inquisitive people. One incident, however, I noticed as remarkable; namely, that although these two Abyssinian gentlemen stared with astonishment at the wounded boy, and asked who he was, and how he had been wounded, at a slight but significant movement of the hand of Joas they became silent. Arrived within the hut, and the couch of honor being given to me, they bowed and left us; but Joas, the apparently black slave, followed them into a neighboring hut, where, after having been what we should here term

"closeted" with them for half an hour, he rejoined Peter, the boy, and I.

"The warriors, then, Joas, are friends of yours? — perhaps they know you for whom you are?" I said, interrogatively.

"Aito, and my good friend," he replied, "these warriors and I never met before; yet are they not my enemies.

"Then," I again said, inquisitively, "am I correct in believing that there is no longer any necessity for clothing your handsome person in that hideous paint?"

"Aito," he replied, "who knows? — the once-wounded gazelle fears the approach of any hunter. Sufficient," he added, "is it for the present to know that I am his friend — his grateful friend."

"Bedad, that's beating about the bush, your honor, to small purpose!" said Peter; adding to Joas, "but mayhap your *highness* — for, I take it, you *are* a highness now you have got among your friends again — will tell us what you had to say about the poor little cratur, the boy here, to them ginerals, or field-marschals, or whatever rank they are in the service; at all evints, when ye lifted your little finger, and winked your eye at 'em, they didn't behave as officers do to privates."

"My friend," replied Joas, with greater dignity of manner and tone than he had ever used before, "that justice may be done, it is necessary that the boy's presence, or, at least his adventure with his cruel master, should not be known to the people before it has reached the ears of the Viceroy."

"True," replied Peter, with a cunning look, "you've let the cat out of the bag; this Viceroy is *Mr. Shee-too*, your brother, the Prince of them Tigers you told us about."

"Aito, no!" was the reply; "this Viceroy is *not* my

brother, Sheton, but he is my friend, and being so, the friend of my friends."

"A good reply. Now, let us seek what rest we may," I said, and in less than ten minutes afterwards we were asleep.

In the morning, shortly after daybreak, a *balderábba* — that is, an officer especially appointed by the princes of Abyssinia as interpreter, or general agent to strangers — came to conduct us to the Viceroy's camp. Peter and I accompanied this official; Joas remained behind to see the boy conveyed in a kind of covered litter.

The camp of an Abyssinian prince presents a very picturesque appearance. The tents are varied in form — some bell-shaped, some square, some white, some black. The huts are also of different sizes and colors; and their inmates, with their horses and mules, scattered about in groups. The Viceroy's dwelling, which consisted of several large thatched huts, and a great tent, was enclosed by a double fence of thorns, at the entrance through which guards were stationed, the space between them being divided into courts, in which the soldiers or other people craving audience of the prince were awaiting his pleasure. The next circle was composed of the tents of the steward of the household, and his numerous followers — men who serve as porters at change of quarters, and soldiers in time of war. Then, around these were the tents of the body-guard; near these, again, were the bearers of firearms, and the big drummers. After these, nearly in semicircle, were the tents of subaltern chiefs, their officers, and followers.

Literally forcing our way through crowds of idlers, with whom, at least in the eyes of an English officer, discipline seemed a thing unknown, we reached the Viceroy's tent,

and were speedily ushered into a large apartment crowded with people, at which I felt much annoyed, for I had expected an immediate, and something like a private, audience. Probably my conductor noticed my vexation, and divined its cause; for he said:

"His highness the Prince Viceroy is distributing justice."

"And I'd like to see the justice that's to be got from the like of that savage Rapparee!" said Peter, in a whisper. And as it is more than possible many of my readers may be of the same opinion, I will describe two or three of the cases, merely reminding them that when in Rome they must not only *do* as Romans *do*, but look with the same lights.

The first was that of an old woman, who, throwing herself at the foot of the throne, cried, "Justice, justice, O prince! My only son has been slain in the war with the Barea—not by the enemy, but murdered by his own comrade, who is here present, and who treacherously slew my boy in order to obtain the trophy which he has presented to his chief as the proof of his great valor." Witnesses then having been examined by the prince, and the guilt of the accused clearly proved, his highness, addressing her, said:

"My good mother, it is true that your son has been most cruelly and treacherously murdered, and that you have a right to demand the blood of the assassin; but you are old and poor, and now, since the death of your child, have no one to support you. Of what benefit will this man's blood be to you? Let him rather ransom his life with money, that will serve to compensate you for the loss you have sustained."

"You speak thus, O great prince! to try me. You

wish but to see whether my demand for justice is prompted by a just regret for my great loss, or by the hope of gaining by his death. Even were I to accept money, so just a prince would never permit so vile a wretch as my son's murderer to live. No, no! — I want not money. It shall never be said that my only son fed me while he lived, and that I lived by his blood after his death."

"You are right, mother: it was but to try you that I suggested a money compensation. I applaud your determination, and assent to the murderer's death. But you have no relations here: will you kill him yourself?"

"If I cannot kill him myself," replied the woman, "God will find some one to revenge me."

With this the old woman left, and within a few days found a man who, for a sum of money, in fact the murderer's property, slew him. It is horrible, and must be explained by the fact that, by the law of Abyssinia, a murderer, when arrested, is given up to the relatives of his victim, of whom the nearest of kin puts him to death with the same kind of weapon as that with which he had slain their relative.

Horrible! echoes the reader; but in justice to the less than semi-civilized Abyssinians, let him remember that among people boasting Anglo-Saxon blood justice is scarcely less wild. It was not very much better (in short, not at all) in the fair realm of England a half century since.

"Now," said the prince, when the woman had left, "we will reward those of our brave soldiers who have helped to destroy the Barea slaves. Let those who have trophies come forward."

Whereupon soldier after soldier came to the front, and after descanting upon his valorous exploits in the field against the Barea, laid his trophy at the prince's feet, and

received in return, if an officer, a gift of honor, such, for instance, as the government of a certain district, or promotion in the army; if a simple soldier, a monetary gift. Among the officers was one at the sight of whom my blood ran cold; namely:

THE WOULD-BE SLAYER OF THE WOUNDED LAD!

Upon this *man*, this *officer*, for he held considerable rank, the prince smiled graciously, and bade him tell again of those gallant deeds of which he had already heard, and of which he knew so brave a warrior and leader would be too modest to speak in appropriate terms.

"Be the powers! I'll —"

"Hush, Peter! — the rascal wont have it *all* his own way," I said, as the good fellow, unable to restrain his indignation, was about to proclaim the man for what he was, albeit in a language that, although not understood by the prince, would have caused him perhaps to demand an interpretation.

"Bedad, the rascal wont, your honor, if I can help it, whatever the dark ould gintleman in the chair *may* say," he replied, surlily.

I must here remark, that I had interpreted to Peter the prince's speech.

To return to my narrative.

The warrior, taking his cue, as in theatrical parlance it is called, from the prince, began by declaring his devotion to his highness; told of the great deeds he had performed against the Barea, all the while "fighting his battles over again" by flourishing his spear and stamping his feet; then recounting his earlier feats of arms, his name, birth, and titles; then placing the trophy — that is, the piece of *flesh* he had cut from the poor lad — at the feet of the

prince, ended by deploring the loss of his poor page, and shedding tears of affection *in memoriam*.

The prince smiled again *graciously*, and turned round as if to place his hand upon some jewel or token of his love. Whereupon the hero, filled with pride, fell upon his knees to receive it, modestly holding his head down.

"Never fear, *you my brother*" (parenthetically let me remark that the prince never used this endearing phrase except as the prelude to some terrible stroke of justice), "I love to reward my brave followers according to their merits."

Overjoyed, the warrior lifted his head, but, by the side of the prince, just arisen from behind the throne, stood Joas, and, more terrible to the assassin,

THE MURDERED PAGE!

Paralyzed by fear, for now he knew that his villany was discovered, or perhaps believing the boy to be a spirit, he fell backwards, when several of the attendants immediately came forward and bound his hands and feet. The prince then, with that terrible *graciousness*, said:

"My brave follower, what greater reward can I offer you for your great deeds than to restore alive to you that dear faithful lad whom you treated with so much affection, in whose defence you fought so valiantly, and whom you mourned as dead!" Then turning to the boy, he said, with a sardonic smile:

"My poor boy go and embrace your kind master!"

The youth, who had, of course, been instructed beforehand, crawled, for he could not walk, towards the prisoner, and with fiendish delight put the point of the spear upon his master's stomach, and endeavored, by throwing his weight upon the other end, to pierce him through.

"Bedad, though, but you musn't do that, you young varmint, till the rascal's told us what he's done with the Doctor!" cried Peter, running forward and lifting the lad away, to the no slight astonishment of the Abyssinians, who angrily would have fallen upon Peter; but Joas whispering in the Viceroy's ear, his highness, waving his hand to them to desist, said:

"That is true; the learned Frank, the Doctor Bey, the friend of the Aito, is lost: he must be found!"

"Dog!" cried Joas, now coming forward and placing his foot upon the prostrate warrior, "what has become of the great Frank Doctor, whom you stole away from Halai? Answer, or the torments attending thy execution shall be doubled!"

The worm will turn when trodden on, rats will attack when driven in a corner, so cowards become defiant when hope has gone; thus, knowing he was condemned to die, the Abyssinian warrior, with fiendish exultation, replied: "Dog of a prince! thou art triumphant but over my body; the Frank Doctor has passed to the shade, sent thither by my sword: he is dead!"

"The Doctor dead!" I exclaimed, aghast.

"The Doctor dead!" cried Peter, tears starting in his eyes. "Och! by the powers, then, it serves us right; for why did we bring the dear child among such a set of murdering thieves!"

"Is this true?" asked Joas, sternly. "And the Lady Esther?"

"The *woman* Esther, prince," he replied, again, with savage exultation, gratified revenge, "is in the house of thy servant at Gondar, the meanest of his wives. The king gave her to me in reward for my service. Ah! ah! ah!"

The savage element in his nature now uppermost, I thought Joas would have slain the villain on the spot. For a minute the struggle in his breast seemed terrific; his Christian culture, however, obtaining the mastery, he turned away and whispered again to the Viceroy; whereupon his highness said:

"This wretch must be taken to Gondar for the king to decide his doom. In the meantime, let his goods, chattels, all and every thing he possesses, be given to the poor boy, his victim."

"The poor Doctor — the dear Doctor!" cried Peter; adding, however, suddenly, "but I wont believe he's dead; he could have crushed the life out of a dozen such var-mints as that."

"This man may be a great liar — let us hope," said Joas; "we will on to Gondar and discover the truth."

"Bless ye, Mister Joas! — I beg your pardon, I mane your highness; for it's a prince you are now, I can see, from the civility to you of the nice ould gintleman on the stool there. Bless ye, I say, for that little chance!" and Peter, soldier, man as he was, sobbed at the possible fate of our friend McTow.

The assassin then having been removed, the Viceroy invited us all to sup with him. That, however, we refused, so anxious were we to ascertain the fate of McTow. So, having partaken of a slight refreshment only, we, according to promise, left the white pony with the Viceroy, and taking leave of his highness, started at once for the capital.

From the foregoing trials, if so they may be called, I learned that, as with many other savage people, the Mo-saic or "blood for blood" law is the rule in cases of murder.

So far the theory ; practically, however, the golden calf of *civilization* is worshipped — at least at the present time, under the rule of a sovereign who is sufficiently civilized for the Emperor Napoleon to desire his friendship, *some* say with a view to colonization, if not conquest ; and for this we have the authority of Rev. Mr. Stern, the most recent traveller in Abyssinia, who says : “ Murder, that most heinous of all offences, by a strange perversion of the Mosaic law, is *but seldom* capitally punished. According to the Abyssinian code of justice, a man, whether guilty of manslaughter or wilful murder, has forfeited his life, and must either pay a ransom, which varies from fifty to two hundred and fifty Maria Theresa dollars, or suffer the extreme penalty of his crime. In most instances, however, if the murderer does not possess the requisite amount, he is chained to a relation of the deceased, and obliged to beg till he has collected the stipulated sum.

“ The murderer has, however, another chance of escape. He may, as was once the case in European countries, elude his pursuers by taking refuge in a church, where the priests will negotiate the price of his release ; or, if he be sufficiently alert, he may retire to another province, and in perfect security repent his guilty deed. But the boundaries are well defined, and should he grow impatient in his foreign home, and, in the illusive hope that time has obliterated the remembrance of his guilt, revisit the land of his birth, inevitable death will assuredly be his lot.

“ An instance of this kind occurred not long ago. A man in the province of Godjam quarrelled with a neighbor, and deliberately killed him. The Abai river being near, he plunged in and crossed over to Amhara. *Sixteen* years he remained in the land of his adoption, enjoying quiet and undisturbed seclusion. The lapse of this long

period, and the removal of several of his bitterest foes, allayed his apprehension of detection, and in an evil hour he recrossed the deep waters, and over roads untrodden by travellers, hastened to embrace once more the friends and kindred dear to his heart. Already he beheld the hut which had sheltered him in former days ; already he heard the voices that sounded like sweet music in his ears ; already he was clasped to the breast that had pilloved him in happy infancy, when, unperceived, the avenger stole to his side, and dragged him, amidst the lamentations of mother and sisters, to a murderer's doom."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A NIGHT WITH THE PRIESTS OF ABYSSINIA.

So far as pleasant companionship, freedom from the attacks of banditti and wild beasts, our journey to Gondar was comparatively enjoyable; for we travelled with a caravan that was proceeding to the capital under an escort.

Nevertheless, it was three weeks of toil — wearisome toil — through swampy valleys, over rocky hills, through tangled jungle, and across streams beset with hippopotami and crocodiles. True, the scenery was sometimes beautiful, occasionally grand, and at one portion we were interested by a queer community of monks, who, by the way, treated us hospitably. This was in the Valley of the Hyenas, a spot inhabited by monks, who, for mortification's sake, have retired to this unwholesome, hot, and dangerous country, voluntarily to spend their lives in penitence and prayer. These *religieux* admit but one other class of persons among them; namely, great men, who, being in disgrace at court, seek their retreat. These nobles, upon entering the district, shave their hair, and put on a cowl like the monks, renouncing the world for solitude, and taking vows which they resolve to keep no longer than exigencies require; after which they return to the world

again, leaving their cowl and sanctity in Waldabba; fully realizing the doggerel —

“The devil was ill, the devil a monk would be ;
The devil got well, the devil a monk was he !”

At length we clambered the great mountain Lamalmon, from whence we obtained a sight of Amba Gideon, or the *Jews' Rock*, so famous in Abyssinian history for the many revolts of the Jews against the Abyssinian kings — a rock so steep and high that it has ever been held impregnable. On the top is a large plain, affording plenty of pasture, as well as room for ploughing and sowing for the maintenance of an army; then there is water at all seasons, and such a plentiful supply of fish, that although the inhabitants of the mountain have often been besieged for a considerable time together, they were never taken except by treason — “except,” the Portuguese historian says, “by the celebrated Christopher de Gama and his troop, who stormed the rock and put the garrison to the sword.”

Wearisome, most wearisome, was the passage across Lamalmon; but patience, perseverance, and at length we were in sight of the capital, Gondar, with its crooked, narrow, steep, and filthy streets, its circular stone houses with thatched roofs, its forty-four churches, and its ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, composed of priests and merchants, but few being citizens or soldiers, and the whole held in such doubtful repute in other Abyssinian cities, towns, and villages, that notwithstanding their religious professions, the grossest offence committed by a resident in the metropolis is palliated by the sarcastic remark, “Oh, he lives at *Gondar* !”

It was near sunset when we came to a small stream in

the immediate suburb of the city. On the banks were a number of tents ; observing which, Peter said :

"It's a mighty small army your king has, Mr. Joas, — that is, I mane your highness, — if it's packed in them small parcels."

"Nonsense, Peter: some merry-making is either going on, or in preparation," said I, observing a multitude of people grouped near the tents, and all seemingly wearing their holiday — not garments, but — manners ; for they were already very boisterous.

"It is the eve of Epphas: after their fast, the priests are about feasting," said Joas. "See, they are even now coming;" and he pointed to a column of men then advancing from a plantation, which, on level ground, hid the city from our view. It was a sacerdotal procession, consisting of some hundred priests, with their scribes and attendants, bearing with them the gorgeous paraphernalia of their church.

"Shure, then, it's refreshing to hear of a fast, after what we have seen of your countrymen's eating," said Peter.

"Abyssinians," replied Joas, "feast well, gluttonously, as Europeans believe ; but their fasts are more numerous than those of any other Christian people, for more than two thirds of the whole year is assigned to abstinence."

"Botheration!" exclaimed Peter; "it's but little real fighting they can do then!"

"Moreover," continued Joas, "their fasting is real; not only are they compelled, like the Roman Catholics among Europeans, to abstain from animal food, but they must refrain from eating or drinking anything whatever till sunset."

"Shure, then, that's why the holy gentlemen yonder are

putting their best legs foremost, for fear the old sun 'ud set before 'em."

"True," said Joas, "they are running; they are half-famished; for, superstitious though the ordinances of their church may be, they observe them rigorously — nay, even the hardest toiling laborers are equally punctilious; for a man who is known to neglect the rules of the church is looked upon almost as an infidel, and, should he die in such a state of disobedience, his body would be refused sepulture in the church. But," he added, "here they are: let us join them."

"Not so, Joas," I said; "I feast not until I have discovered the fate of my friend the Doctor."

"Aito, you cannot help yourself," he replied; and it was perfectly true; for, in another minute or so we were surrounded, and amid a storm of welcomes to Gondar as strangers on that auspicious occasion, were hurried into one of the tents, and *vi et armis* compelled to make a night of it. But a night with Abyssinian priests is a novelty; let me attempt its description.

First was the feast, the eatables being of every variety, and accompanied with buckets of beer and honey-mead, all supplied by voluntary contributions of the faithful, who believe that to give on such occasions is an act of godliness; albeit they know that the priests thereby transform themselves into — well, it would be libellous to the four-footed world to say *beasts*, for *they* are neither gourmands or drunkards. After the eating, the chief element of the entertainment seemed to me to be a kind of maudlin piety. If the performers had not been semi-savages, the better phrase would be a blasphemous ribaldry; for, after the tapping of the drink, the whole night was passed alternately in prayer, singing, dancing, and drinking; the first

being sacred, the second an imitation of the religious dancing of the Israelites; that is, a peculiar kind of shrugging of the body, and stamping of the feet; the degrees of vehemence of the movements being regulated according to the depth of the performer's potations. I may, however, fairly state that by sunrise, when the sacrament was administered, it would have been difficult to have mistaken any one of the performers for a teetotaller.

At sunrise, after the sacrament had been distributed amongst those of the priests whose religious fervor—I thought deep potations—had not tumbled into the stream, the chief priest blessed the water, and immediately after, the people bathed, or, in plain English, indulged in their *annual wash*; for not much oftener do the generality of Abyssinians perform their ablutions.

After this the men and women began to enjoy themselves,—dancing, singing, and engaging in different sports. Those of the men who possessed horses engaged in a kind of tournament or mimic fight. Those less fortunate, and who possessed only the legs nature had given them, played at *hockey*, and that, too, with such terrible earnestness, that the winning party sung a war-chant.

The sport being ended, the people divided into parishes, formed into processions, each under its respective priests, and then marched to the church to replace the ark, which, containing the commandments, was borne on the head of a priest, shaded by a canopy. The holy utensils, which, by the way, no layman may approach, being deposited in the church, the people returned to their homes or huts, therein to pass the rest of the day in merry-making; and Joas, Peter, and I to a large house—at least large for Abyssinia, where all dwellings are huts—which the former had by some mysterious influence procured for us.

In concluding this chapter, it may be as well to tell my readers that, although throughout this narrative I have alluded to a certain form of Christianity as being the prevailing religion of Abyssinia, in fact the *state* religion, there are scattered throughout the land vast numbers of Mahometans, and Falashas, or Jews. The disciples of the Prophet are mostly descendants of families who adopted that faith in the early times of Islamism, when the Christians of Ethiopia were surrounded, and often overpowered, by the victorious followers of Mahomet. These people are, curiously enough, for the most part engaged in commerce and manufactures, few being soldiers, and all esteemed by the Christians as cowardly and effeminate.

The Falashas, or Jews, although boasting their descent from the first settlers in the land, and who still retain the ancient religion of the country, before the introduction of Christianity, are much less numerous than the Mahometans, and confine themselves principally to certain districts. With respect to Christianity, it is said that the gospel was introduced into Abyssinia by Frumentius, about A.D. 330. "Previously to this date," says one writer, "it is probable that no attempt had been made towards the conversion of Abyssinia, although by some it is asserted that such an attempt was made by the eunuch of Queen Candace, whom Philip baptized; while others pretend that St. Matthew and St. Bartholomew actually visited the country. Others even go so far as to assert that the Virgin Mary herself, with the child Jesus, came into Abyssinia when she fled to Egypt, and show a place in a high mountain which is called her throne or seat."

CHAPTER XXV.

PETER AND THE BEGGAR BOYS.

"THE Aito and my good friend Peter are fatigued with their night's adventures: let them seek a few hours' refreshing sleep," said Joas, as we entered the hut.

"Truly, I am fairly exhausted by the long hours and the turmoil. But *you*, Joas," I said, "will you not also rest?"

"Aito, not so!" he replied; "*I* must not sleep in Gondar until I have reported my arrival to the king, and have learned from his majesty the fate of the good Doctor and the beautiful Esther."

"Well, well," I replied, "go then, and heaven speed your desire!"

"But before I go, Aito," he said, halting at the threshold, "one word of caution. This is another feast day; the boys of the city will soon be begging at every house. If, therefore, you would rest in peace, fasten the door on the inner side. Moreover, should I be detained, you will find in the next apartment an ample supply of refreshment."

"Refreshment!" echoed Peter, adding, after he had taken a satisfactory survey of sundry good things in the other room, "shure, thin, it's a broth of a country to live in, barring the heat, and that kills one intirely."

"Come, come," I said, with a yawn, "fasten the door, and let us get a little rest while we may." And stretch-

ing my limbs upon the earth, I was soon asleep. Our slumber, however, was but shortlived, perhaps not longer than a couple of hours, when there was a bang, bang, banging at the door, and loud cries without of "*Mishamisho! Mishamisho!*"

"Miss Hamisho? Miss Hamisho?" exclaimed Peter, indignant at being so abruptly awakened. "Bedad, thin, ye have come to the wrong house, for the lady don't live here!"

"It is a party of the boys of whom Joas warned us. They are begging," said I.

"Faith, your honor," he replied, "'tis little use their begging for what we cannot give them." But the cries became louder and louder.

"*Mishamisho! Mishamisho!*"

Peter, losing all patience, now opened the door, and exclaimed angrily, "Get out wid ye, you noisy divils!"

The boys, delighted at their success in getting the door opened, only exclaimed the more, "*Mishamisho! Mishamisho!*"

"Get away! get away wid ye! — Miss Hamisho doesn't live here I tell you!"

Nevertheless they continued the cry; adding now, "May God give ye cattle in your yard, and children to your bosom; and may those you have already grow up in health and strength!"

"Faith, that's a dacent wish, and better than asking for the lady, anyhow," said Peter.

"Nonsense!" I said, "these boys are begging for food, and it's only by complying with their request that we can get rid of them; so fetch some refreshments from the other room. In the meantime I will distribute ten pounds among them."

"Shure your honor's mad!" replied Peter, staring at me with undisguised astonishment. "Ten *pounds* did ye say, to the little blackguards?"

"Ay, Peter, ten pounds — of *salt*!"

"Faith," he replied, laughing, "your honor has the best of me this time. But shure, something's wrong with me poor head, or I'd never have forgotten that bits of salt's the coin current in this queer country; but now I'll just be after serving out the rations to these imps."

So saying, Peter went into the next room, and I began distributing the salt among the youngsters. This, however, did but whet their appetites for further presents; for without asking permission, they had no sooner received the money than one and all ran after Peter.

"There, take that, and that, and that, ye hungry rap-scallions!" said the old soldier, as he tossed lumps of bread one after the other, to the boys, "and get about your business."

But they would not be so easily dismissed. "No!" they cried, with one voice, "the bread is dry; we can't eat it without butter!"

"It's butter, is it, you ask so civilly for?" cried Peter, not a little astonished at their impudence. And he tossed several huge lumps among them; whereupon a great scramble took place. This, however, was but a make-believe, for they speedily divided it into fair proportions, and clamored afresh for a large dish of dressed meat which had caught their sight.

"Get out wid ye! get out, ye little divils!" cried Peter, really as angry as he was astonished at their importunity, and he would have cuffed them severely; but amused at the scene, I begged of him to give them the dressed food.

"Axing your honor's pardon," replied Peter, surlily, "but I belave you are too good-natured. Faith, I have seen beggars in ould Ireland, but these juvenile cannibals bates them by long chalks. Now, shure, Master Ned," he added, coaxingly, "you don't mane what you say? You'll be after making spoilt children of 'em!"

"Nonsense, Peter! — they deserve all they can get, for their perseverance. Give them the dish!"

"Bedad," said he, more surlily than ever, "you tache the imps as if they were born gintlemen! You'd give 'em the moon if they cried for it! If they were your honor's own children, you couldn't do more, and maybe wouldn't do so much. For my part, I'd tache 'em, the dirty little drummers, manners with the *soft* end of a gun-sling! Howsomdever," he added, addressing the boys, "it's his honor's orders, and here's the dish; and now get out wid you!"

The boys received the dish with a shout; but having placed it beyond means of rescue, they then clamored, of course in their own language, for pepper, salt, and onions, declaring they could not eat it without.

"And what is it they are saying now?" asked Peter.

I translated their request; upon hearing which, Peter's indignation was so great, that, snatching up a great stick in the room, he would have fallen upon the whole body had I not sternly forbidden him so doing; albeit at the same time I had the greatest difficulty in preventing an outburst of laughter.

"And your honor manes me to humor the dirty little vagabonds?" he said.

"Certainly, Peter!"

This was enough. Peter delivered the pepper, salt, and onions, and again the urchins shouted.

"Bedad," cried Peter, "you may well shout, for, thanks to his honor, ye have gained the victory. Now get out wid you!"

But no! — there arose another clamor, another demand; and seeing the workings of Peter's countenance, I had little doubt that he contemplated open mutiny, the more so as by a painful effort he subdued his anger, and said very softly, slowly:

"And, please your honor, what may the little — I mane the young gintleman, be asking so civilly for now?" and his fingers nervously clutched the before-mentioned stick, which he still held in his hand.

"They are begging," said I, "for beer. They say that it will kill them to eat all you have so nobly given them if you don't give them some beer." To my surprise, Peter's eyes glistened with delight.

"It's now that I'll forgive the little rascals, for they are after my own heart; they know what's good for themselves, the dear, reasonable craturs! They would have been bastes if they could have made away with all those things without a drop of beer.

Accordingly, he gave them the beer. In acknowledgment, they gave another lusty shout, but at last quitted the hut.

"They are amusing fellows, Peter," said I; "let us follow them, and see where and after what fashion they will feast."

"Shure, Master Ned, I'll follow the funny little spicimins anywhere; for although there's more of the ilimint of the rogue than the fool among 'em, they are reasonable creatures, or they wouldn't have asked for that beer."

"It's a queer test of reason. But what have we here?"
I said, somewhat startled, as we quitted the hut, to see a funeral procession in the streets on a festival day.

"It's a queer burying, too, Master Ned. Look, priests, bearers, and mourners are all boys!"

Peter was right. The procession consisted of four who bore the couch upon which was placed the body, some half-dozen priests, and about twenty mourners; but all were boys. As the party moved slowly along the street the mourners groaned and plaintively cried, '*Wai, wai, wai!*' the common funereal cry, adding the name of the deceased; but that I could not catch. "Alas!" they wailed, "the good, the great, the generous Aito, he is dead!"—the Aito who possessed riches and generously gave to the poor!"

Amused at the scene, for there was something inexpressibly comic in the whole affair, we left our first party of young friends and followed the procession till it arrived at a small copse, near to which was the grave already dug and prepared. Here they placed the body by the side of the grave, and again they began to bewail the loss of their friend. This time I distinguished the name, but imagine my horror! It was "*The great Frank Doctor; the good, generous Aito, McTow Bey.*"

At the words, I ran towards the funeral couch instinctively, to take a last look at my poor friend; but it was too ridiculous: there was nothing but a heap of old clothes. The whole thing was a sham,—a ghastly make-believe!

"What's the maning of all this?" cried Peter, seizing two of the boys by the throat.

"Dogs!" I cried, catching hold of another couple, "where is the Frank Doctor you have been pretending to bury?"

"*Wa! wa!*" exclaimed the youngsters, astonished at this treatment, and their knees knocking together with fear.

"Och, Master Ned, look!" cried Peter, trembling from head to foot; "his honor the Doctor's been buried in real earnest, for, shure, his ghost has come back to shake hands with his ould friends!"

And, sure enough, the Doctor suddenly sprang up from the hole which had been meant to represent his grave, and began at once to lay a great stick about the shoulders and heads of the boys, who now ran off in every direction.

That he intended to frighten rather than seriously hurt them, however, was apparent; for as soon as the urchins had scampered out of ear-shot, he shook hands with Peter and I, and laughing, said:

"I'm right glad to see ye weel, and at sic a moment, too; but ye dinna ken the trouble those devil's bairns ha' been giving me, just because I wouldna gie them presents according to custom."

"Shure, Doctor, dear, it's making game of you they've been, for they didn't ask you to your own burying," said Peter.

"Well, well, Doctor," said I, "I can rejoice that they were only in jest, and not burying you in earnest; for at first I had sad misgivings."

"But you wouldna call it verra weel," replied he, "to be made the laughing-stock of the whole city by a pack of urchins, which I should have been had not one of my servants told me of their intention. But," he added, "the laugh is now against them; and so, just come along to my house and refresh your inner man, for ye both look sore worn and travel-stained."

"But, Doctor, our friend Joas will be seeking us at our hut."

"Eh, mon — Joas!" he repeated, thoughtfully; but a moment after he added, "dinna fear about the lad. If he

wants to see you, and canna do it at your hut, he'll come to mine, — tak' my word for it."

"I see — you *have* seen him, Doctor," said I.

"Verra true, I have ; and what's more, I know that the lad will be too much engaged to-day and during the night to see either of us ; so just bridle your impatience until to-morrow, and come along. Here we are," he added, as we stopped in front of what, in Gondar, is considered a large and handsome house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

THE interior of the Doctor's house surprised us, for it bore a stronger resemblance to a civilized dwelling than any we had hitherto seen in Abyssinia. There were positive windows shaded by curtains; the walls were hung with white cloth; a handsome Persian carpet covered the floor; moreover, there was a good mahogany table, three couches, and half a dozen chairs, luxuriously stuffed, and covered with Utrecht velvet.

"By the powers, Doctor, this is the first house I have seen in the country that wasn't a pigstye!" exclaimed Peter, with a stare of admiration.

"Peter is right," said I; "you are quartered like a general, Doctor."

"Verra true," was the reply; "and what is better, I have been treated like a general ever since I have been here. But dinna clack, mon, till you've been fed; and I tak' it I'll astonish you with Christian rations."

So saying, he struck a small gong, which was suspended from the roof, and half a dozen slaves made their appearance, bringing dishes of cold guinea-fowl and venison, dressed after the European fashion, and several bottles containing, respectively, champagne, cognac brandy, and Bass's pale ale.

"Ye dinna ken, ye dinna ken the meaning of it," said

the Doctor, laughing at the astonishment depicted on our faces.

"Shure, thin, it's at home we'd be at onst if one of 'em was whiskey," said Peter.

"You are right, Doctor," I replied, "I '*dinna* ken.'"

"Weel, then," he replied, "the meaning is, first, that his majesty, the Emperor, is a great man, a real prince in heart and mind, who intends to civilize himself and his people; and I tak' it he has begun at the right end by sending orders to the merchants of Cairo for a few of the good things of European life."

"Faith, Doctor dear," said Peter, "it's a promising beginning, but the poor benighted crature's education 'll not be intire till he fetches the whiskey and the petaties into his country."

"All in good time," replied the Doctor; "but now sit ye down and perform the first duty of man upon earth by appeasing your appetite, and *dinna* utter another word till ye have finished."

"To hear is to obey," was the Doctor's motto, under such circumstances; thus we complied. And having concluded a moderate repast of wholesome food, broached the pale ale (Peter chose brandy, as being the nearest of kin to whiskey), and lighted our pipes, the jolly Scotchman began:

"Now, I tak' it, ye'd like to know something of my adventures sin' we parted company. It's a short story and soon told. Weel, on the night of the day you left Arkiko to go to the medicinal waters, not long, I believe, after I had turned in, I was suddenly awakened by a savage shout; moreover, my mouth, my eyes, were filled with smoke. For a minute I was senseless, my brain seemed benumbed, but a bright flame suddenly lit up the interior

of the hut, I leaped towards the door, and my real position was apparent, — **THE HUT WAS ON FIRE!** To open the door was the work of an instant, but the next I was seized, bound hand and foot, and placed upon a mule. To struggle even was impossible. I shouted aloud your name, but the rascal caterans stopped that by binding a cloth tightly round my mouth; and in this position I was taken out of Arkiko. I had no thought of my real kidnappers; far worse, I made up my mind that the chief of the town had seized me to sell me into slavery, or to hold me prisoner until I had paid him a heavy ransom. I was, therefore, no less pleased than surprised, when, about the middle of the next day, the bandage was removed from my eyes and mouth. I found myself in the wilderness (for my captors had pushed forward with all speed), surrounded by some twenty or thirty Gallas. These savages were evidently under the command of our friend the Abyssinian warrior, — he, I mean, who had attempted the life of Joas. I have said that I was pleased at finding myself in that position. It was not, however, because I was in the hands of the Gallas, but because the Abyssinian approached me with every mark of respect, apologized for the force that had been used, and told me that I had been captured only to attend to the beautiful Esther, who he declared was his betrothed, whom he had also seized, and was then conveying to Gondar, to the Emperor, when his majesty would give her to him as a wife.

“But,” said I, “how is this, then, rogue — if you know it be his majesty’s intention to give you the girl, why not wait until she reaches the capital?”

“The noble Frank is dull,” he replied; “the Emperor will give her to the man who takes her to his footstool. *She was stolen from me.* I was ordered out of Ar-

kiko to proceed homewards alone ; thus the sham black, traitor as he is, would have taken her, and so robbed me of my bride, — I, who had been the means of rescuing her from slavery.'

"Now, you see, mon," continued the Doctor, "when the rogue had shown me the foul game he was playing, I resolved to circumvent him if possible. But as I was in his power, and verra much like a cat in a certain unmentionable place without claws, I pretended to willingly fall in with his plans, and go like a lamb to the slaughter, trusting to the chapter of accidents for my opportunity. Weel, upon the whole, we had a tolerably good journey. When, however, we reached the city, and he took the girl before the Emperor and demanded her as his wife, Esther told the story of his roguery, and, moreover, that he had kidnapped a great Frank Doctor. Now, as his majesty is very anxious to stand well in the eyes of the European governments, but especially those of France and England, he exhibited great indignation at the outrage, and sent the fellow at once to bring me before him. The rest is soon told. The Emperor gave me a warm welcome, and, having listened to my story, ordered his guards to hew the rogue to pieces. At this, however, I demurred, and pleaded hard for his pardon ; for I thought the fellow had been punished sufficiently by the ruin of his plans. His majesty granted my prayer, but there and then ordered him to quit Gondar, and to proceed at once to his feudal chief, the Viceroy of Adoua, who, it appears, is waging war on behalf of his majesty against the Barea."

"By the powers, Doctor, thin' ye did just the most cruel act against humanity ye ever did in your born days," said Peter.

The Doctor stared.

"Peter is right," I said; and at once told him our adventure with the Barea, and the scenes we had witnessed between the soldier and his page in the wilderness, and before the Viceroy at Adoua. "But, thank Heaven," I added, "the rogue told two falsehoods, — one, that you were dead, Doctor; the other, that Esther was his wife."

"And to that Heaven," replied the Doctor, "let us leave the punishment or pardon of his crimes in another world, for in *this*, poor wretch, he will find but little mercy!"

The remainder of the day we spent in listening to the Doctor's account of the Emperor and his court. First and foremost he told us that the prince, whose noble had been his patient in Cairo, and to attend whom professionally he had visited Abyssinia, had been deposed, slain, and succeeded by the Emperor Theodorus. Of the latter he gave us a glowing account; namely, that, having raised himself to the throne, his majesty had commenced his reign as a great civilizer and reformer; that is, he had made Christianity the established religion of Ethiopia, commanding his subjects of other creeds to embrace the true faith within a given period, under the penalty of death; he had prohibited polygamy and the slave trade throughout his dominions; was revising, or rather establishing, a code of laws, under which high and low should be equal; and lastly, that his people might be induced to forego their savage habits, he intended to have them taught trades and manufactures, for which purpose he had sent to England, France, and Germany for skilled artisans and tradespeople, offering immense advantages to all who would settle under his rule.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

EARLY the next morning a troop of horse halted before the house.

"Och, botheration! they mane to put us under arrest!" cried Peter.

"Nonsense, you booby!" said McTow. "Bevan," he continued, "the Emperor has heard of your arrival in Gondar, and, as my friend, has sent this party to escort you to his presence."

"Faith, good manners to his majesty: that's a horse of another color," said Peter.

"The Doctor was right; for the chief, entering the house, desired that we would mount and accompany him to the royal camp, where his majesty was waiting to receive me. Waiting — for that very day he was about to set out in person on an expedition against those tribes who still held out against his authority.

An hour's hard riding, and we reached the camp. The army, some forty thousand strong, was under arms, and preparing to set out. Chiefs, in full war costume, with gold embossed shields, and lances in hand, were galloping to and fro. But every avenue which led to the royal tent was crowded with beggars. Indeed, it would have been impossible to have passed, had not our escort advanced to the front, and, by dint partly of threats, and

partly of blows, made a path for us. At length however, we found ourselves in a large anteroom. Having rested here for an hour, we were introduced into the presence of the Emperor, — a tall, handsome, and intelligent-looking young man, who was seated upon a velvet covered couch, before a pair of curtains.

“The Aito,” his majesty said, as he rose and caught me by both hands, “is welcome, very welcome to Gondar — less as the friend of the esteemed Frank Doctor than as the saviour of my dear brother!”

Seeing my stare of astonishment, his majesty smiled.

“The saviour of your majesty’s brother!” I repeated.

“The Aito is astonished! but it is true — very true,” he continued; and as he spoke, the curtains were drawn aside, and Joas, no longer in the garb of a slave, but in the becoming costume of an Abyssinian prince, and with the beautiful Esther by his side, stepped forward, and shaking me warmly by the hand, said:

“Indeed it is true, my dear friend; but of little value would that life that you preserved have been had you not also been the means of restoring to me my beautiful betrothed.”

Now, whatever my astonishment may have been, it was small compared with that of Peter, who, forgetting the presence in which he stood, first scratched his head, and then exclaimed:

“Och, botheration! it’s as good as a play! The lady, then, isn’t that other fellow’s wife, as he told us, bad luck to him? and the King here, after all, is that Mr. Sheetoo, the Tiger Prince!”

“True, my friend Peter,” said Joas, “except that my royal brother is no longer the Tiger Prince, but the Emperor of Ethiopia!” Then to me he added, “Thus, my

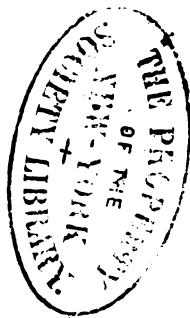
friend, has the prophecy that one of my father's sons should sit in the royal seat become fulfilled ! ”

Of course I congratulated the royal brothers, and delighted the Emperor with a description of the awe in which, under the name of Kasai, he was held by the tribes through which I had passed.

“It is well for them that it is so,” replied the King ; * for, under Providence, and with the aid of my dear brother here, the more speedily shall I bring them back to that faith from which, in all but name, they have departed for centuries.”

The Emperor then invited us to a sumptuous meal ; after which he bade us farewell, and with his brother set out at the head of his army to subdue the rebel tribes. In this expedition, I have since heard, he was so successful, and thereby so consolidated his power, that European governments have become desirous of entering into alliance with him. Would that I had space to record in these pages the marvellous and romantic adventures by which the poor *kosso vender's* son became the reigning sovereign of the renewed empire of Ethiopia.

I have now only to add, that the Doctor, having before my arrival concluded his diplomatic transactions with his majesty, we attached ourselves to the first caravan proceeding to the coast, and at length reached Cairo, without meeting with anything worthy of special record, excepting that, travelling with the prestige of having been the guests of the Emperor, we were at every town and village *en route* treated with distinguished honor.



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